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**BARTOLOMEO MONTAGNA: BUSINESS, ART
AND MOBILITY IN RENAISSANCE VENETO**

Volume One of two volumes (Text)

by Matteo Carpiello

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the History of Art at the University of Warwick.**

This thesis may not be photocopied.

University of Warwick, Department of the History of Art

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

The artistic career of Bartolomeo Cincani, better known as Bartolomeo Montagna (1447?-1523), the *caposcuola* of the Vicentine school of painting, has been widely investigated by scholars, who have taken pains to pin down the strengths and weaknesses of his pictorial language. They have also focused on problems of attribution and on the chronology of his works. However, scholars have neglected a crucial aspect of Montagna's career as an artist and a businessman: his business mindset both in his artistic and real estate activities. An analysis and comparison of the painter's revenue from painting and landownership, as well as of its impact on his socioeconomic status, has not yet been made.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter One is concerned with the shortcomings of the Venice-oriented approach to *terraferma* artists taken by modern scholars, and with the genesis of this approach in Venetian art theory of the Cinquecento and Seicento. I also stress the artistic centrality of Renaissance Vicenza in the Venetian mainland, Montagna's mobility and original handling of artistic otherness, and his Vicentine commissioners' aesthetic needs and taste.¹

Chapter Two is a study of Montagna's private devotional paintings, among which I attempt to identify those likely made on commission or for speculative sale. I shall also focus on the religious and social context in which

¹ My choice of the word "commissioner" instead of "patron" stems from the fact that, as noted by Francis Haskell, "[...] the modern meaning of the term patronage [...] implies by necessity a concept of art as autonomous field, with intrinsic values and processes, usually associated with a peculiar and affectionate attitude of munificence. The true, authentic patronage should imply a personal relationship between the patron and the artist and the development of a sense of respect and protection, which is not related to the interest in obtaining this or that single artwork." On this, see Francis Haskell, 'Mecenatismo e patronato,' in *Enciclopedia Universale dell'arte*, 16 vols (Novara: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1958), vol. 8, pp. 939-956, especially 940. As regards the distinction between "commissioner" and "patron", see also Salvatore Settis, 'Giorgione e i suoi committenti,' in *Giorgione e l'umanesimo veneziano*, ed. Rodolfo Pallucchini (Florence: Olschki, 1981), p. 373.

these works were painted, and on the market-determined artistic output of Montagna's workshop.

Chapter Three is an analysis of Montagna's socioeconomic status in light of his revenue from landownership, which I place in its historical and economic context, of his social ties and deep connection with Vicenza and the Vicentino. By availing myself of published archival documents, I shall also reconstruct his investment trends and money-lending practice, which I compare with contemporary lending policies, such as those of the Jews and the Monti di Pietà.

A Note on Renaissance Exchange in Vicenza

The accounting system in use in Renaissance Vicenza was diverse and considerably complex. The system of pounds and shillings was in use, here called *denari*, which could be *piccoli* or *grossi*, and *soldi*, alongside larger money, the *lira* and the largest, the ducat, whose value in Vicenza was 4 *lire* and 13 *soldi*, that is 93 *soldi* (1 *lira* = 20 *soldi*). However, the value of a ducat could vary in the Veneto. The gold ducat used in Venice, worth 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi*, was larger than the Vicentine ducat. All prices reported in this thesis have been calculated according to the local currency.

List of Abbreviations

ACB = Bassano del Grappa, Archivio del Comune

ASBg = Bergamo, Archivio di Stato

ASBr = Brescia, Archivio di Stato

ASCViVe = Vittorio Veneto, Archivio Storico Comunale

ASF = Florence, Archivio di Stato

ASP = Padua, Archivio di Stato

AST = Treviso, Archivio di Stato

ASV = Vatican, Archivio Segreto

ASVe = Venice, Archivio di Stato

ASVi = Vicenza, Archivio di Stato

ASVr = Verona, Archivio di Stato

BBM = Milan, Biblioteca Braidense

BBVi = Vicenza, Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana

BCM = Macerata, Biblioteca Comunale «Mozzi Borgetti»

BCT = Treviso, Biblioteca Comunale

BMVe = Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana

IPAB = Vicenza, Istituzioni Pubbliche di Assistenza e Beneficenza

App. = appendix

b./bb. = busta/buste

c. = circa

col./cols = column/columns

doct/docts = document/documents

ff. = and the following pages

Fig./Figs = figure/figures

fol./fols = folio/folios

MS = manuscript

n./nn. = number/numbers

N/A = not available

r/v = recto/verso

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Figure 145. Bartolomeo Montagna, *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*, 1515-1520, tempera and oil on poplar panel, Museo Correr, Venice, 80.7 x 55.8 cm.

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Figure 158. Bartolomeo and Benedetto (?) Montagna, *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Peter, John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalen, Francis and the Blessed Giacomo della Marca and Bernardino Tomitano of Feltre*, 1515-1520, oil on canvas,

Courtauld Galleries, London, 209.3 x 175.7 cm.

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Figure 165. Bartolomeo and Benedetto Montagna, *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist*, c. 1520, oil on canvas, Pinacoteca di Palazzo Chiericati, Musei Civici, Vicenza, inventory n. A 7, 79.2 x 68.3 cm.

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Figure 179. Workshop of Alessandro Botticelli, *Virgin and Child with St John the*

Baptist, 1480s, tempera on panel, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, 89.5 x 73.5 cm.

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Figure 183. Workshop of Alessandro Botticelli, *Virgin and Child*, late 1480s, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.

Figure 184. After Bartolomeo Montagna, *Virgin and Child*, 1505-1510, oil on canvas, whereabouts unknown, formerly in the De Noailles collection, Paris, 60 x 50 cm.

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Figure 188. Bartolomeo Montagna, *Virgin Adoring the Child*, 1480-1485, panel, Museo Civico del Castello Sforzesco, Milan, 64 x 53 cm.

Figure 189. Benedetto Montagna (?), *Virgin and Child*, 1515-1520, oil on panel, whereabouts unknown, 65 x 59 cm.

Figure 190. Benedetto Montagna (?), *Virgin Adoring the Child*, 1515-1520, oil on panel, formerly in the Carminati collection, 63 x 52 cm.

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Figure 197. Giovanni Bellini, *Virgin and Child with Devotee*, early 1500s, panel, Alana collection, Newark (Delaware), 83.8 x 67.9 cm.

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Figure 199. Circle of Giovanni Bellini, *Virgin and Child*, sold by Christie's in New York on 17 December 2006 (lot 217), 84.4 x 69.2 cm.

Figure 200. Workshop of Giovanni Bellini, *Virgin and Child*, formerly in a private collection, Bergamo, 98 x 70 cm.

Figure 201. Giovanni Speranza, *Virgin Adoring the Child*, 1521 (?), oil on panel, sold by Christie's on 3 July 2013 (lot 181), 42 x 33.9 cm.

Figure 202. Bartolomeo Montagna, *Virgin Adoring the Child*, 1480-1485, oil and tempera on panel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 62.9 x 52.1 cm.

Figure 203. Giovanni Speranza, *Virgin and Child with Saint Joseph*, after 1503, whereabouts unknown.

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Figure 206. After Lorenzo Lotto, *Virgin and Child with St Joseph and an Angel*, 1513, oil on canvas, Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, 73.2 x 64.2 cm.

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Figure 212. Giovanni Bellini, *Sacra Conversazione Dolphin*, 1507, panel, San Francesco della Vigna, Venice, 97 x 141 cm.

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Figure 214. Cima da Conegliano, *Virgin and Child*, 1495, oil on panel, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, 65.5 x 47.2 cm.

Figure 215. Workshop of Cima da Conegliano, *Virgin and Child*, 1495-1500, oil on panel, Holburne of Menstrie Museum, Bath, 58.4 x 46.4 cm.

Figure 216. Workshop of Cima da Conegliano, *Virgin and Child*, 1495-1500, oil on panel, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, 54 x 36.7 cm.

Figure 217. Bartolomeo Montagna, *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist*, c. 1483, tempera and oil on panel, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 37.8 x 36.5 cm.

Figure 218. Bartolomeo Montagna, *Virgin and Child*, 1490-1495, panel, Museo Civico, Belluno, inventory n. 12, 60.4 x 42.4 cm.

Figure 219. Andrea Mantegna, *Madonna della Vittoria*, 1496, tempera on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 280 x 166 cm.

Figure 220. Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Adoration of the Magi*, predella panel of the *Maestà*, 1308-1311, tempera on panel, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena, 42.5 x 43.5 cm.

Figure 221. Giovanni Speranza, *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*, c. 1490-1536, panel, whereabouts unknown, 47 x 47 cm.

Figure 222. Giovanni Speranza, *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*, after 1512, panel,

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg, 25 x 28 cm.

Figure 223. Benedetto Montagna, *The Virgin and Child with St Joseph and the Infant St John the Baptist in a Landscape*, c. 1510-1512, engraving, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 146 x 211 mm.

Figure 224. Giovanni Bellini, *Virgin and Child with Donor*, c. 1500, tempera and oil on wood, Narodowe Museum, Poznan, 71 x 57 cm.

Figure 225. Marco Basaiti, *Virgin and Child with Donor*, 1500-1501, panel, Museo Correr, Venice, 74 x 57 cm.

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Giovanni in Bragora, Venice, 350 x 210 cm.

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Figure 238. Titian, *Lentiai Polyptych*, after 1549-1551, oil on canvas, Santa Maria Assunta, Lentiai.

Figure 239. Lorenzo Lotto, *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist and St Zechariah*, 1546, oil on canvas, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, 48.7 x 63.6 cm.

Introduction

Mauro Lucco's catalogue of the paintings of Bartolomeo Montagna (1447?-1523), the main painter in Renaissance Vicenza, and Laura De Zuani's doctoral thesis, are the most relevant studies recently published on the artist.² If this renewed interest in Montagna has not yet brought about a monographic exhibition, the re-opening of the twentieth-century wing of the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza in the Palazzo Chiericati on 7 October 2016 bodes well. The refurbished wing displays a reconstruction of the Augustinian church of San Bartolomeo in Vicenza, for which Montagna painted three major altarpieces, *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child with Sts Monica and Mary Magdalen* for the Porto Pagello Chapel, *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist, Bartholomew, Augustine, Sebastian and Three Musical Angels* for the Trento Chapel, and the *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple with Donor* for the Aurifici Chapel [Figs 1-3]. The reconstruction, curated by Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, is a remarkable effort, in that it offers the opportunity to rethink these altarpieces in their original context of San Bartolomeo, which was demolished in the nineteenth century.

The publication of Lucco's catalogue raisonné of Montagna's paintings in 2014 coincided with the early stages of my PhD, when my research interests were confined mainly to the stylistic aspects of his paintings. A careful scrutiny of Manuela Barausse's register of documents published in the catalogue³ led me to focus not only on Montagna's artistic commissions, but also on his real estate activities, given the large amount of notarial deeds on the painter's land investments in the Venetian mainland, or *terraferma*. Most of these documents

² Mauro Lucco, *Bartolomeo Montagna. I dipinti* (Treviso: Zel Edizioni, 2014); Laura De Zuani, 'Bartolomeo Montagna (1450 ca.-1523),' P.h.D. thesis (University of Padua 2015).

³ Manuela Barausse, 'I documenti,' in Lucco (2014), pp. 94-154.

were published a long time ago by Antonio Magrini and, above all, Gian Giorgio Zorzi.⁴ Zorzi was the first scholar who published most of the archival evidence that we have on the artist, although he provided only a few partial transcriptions. Unlike Magrini and Zorzi, in her register of archival documents Manuela Barausse has transcribed most of the notarial deeds concerning the painter's artistic and real estate activities. However, the financial aspects of Montagna's negotiations, particularly his income from painting and from purchase and leaseback loans, also known as *livelli*, as well as the impact of these earnings on his socioeconomic status, are still unexplored.

The main goal of my thesis is to take a more interdisciplinary approach to Montagna's career as an artist and a businessman using the published records. This approach stems from the close interrelation of history of art and economic history. My contention is that Montagna consistently engaged in real estate activities as a sideline through which he supplemented his earnings from painting. By availing myself of published archival documents providing details on payments in cash or kind made or received by Montagna in his negotiations, I demonstrate that the painter invested in real estate on a regular basis throughout his life, especially during the 1480s and 1490s. These investments are instrumental in unveiling his deep commitment to landownership and business acumen, two crucial and as yet neglected elements which emerge from my research. In particular, my study zeroes in on the painter's understanding and exploitation of the financial and social advantages of making interest-

⁴ Antonio Magrini, *Elogio di Bartolomeo Montagna, pittore vicentino. Letto dall'Ab. Antonio Magrini nella pubblica adunanza della I. R. Accademia di Belle Arti in Venezia del dì 3 agosto 1862* (Venice: Antonelli, 1863); Gian Giorgio Zorzi, 'Contributo alla storia dell'arte vicentina nei secoli XV e XVI,' *Miscellanea di storia veneta* 10:3 (1916), pp. 85-173.

bearing loans, which were a long-term and low-risk source of income.⁵ Montagna's artistic and real estate activities also show that, unlike many Renaissance artists from the Venetian Republic, who spent long periods away from their place of origin or workplace, he remained closely tethered to Vicenza and the Vicentino for almost all his life.

Scholars have mainly focused on Montagna as an artist. They have been concerned with assigning a precise chronology to his paintings, pinpointing their technical, stylistic and iconographic aspects, distinguishing the master's hand from his workshop assistants', and placing his pictorial idiom in the art of Renaissance Vicenza and Venice. They have also claimed Montagna's role as the founder and *caposcuola* of the Vicentine school of painting,⁶ which includes Giovanni Buonconsiglio, Giovanni Speranza, Francesco Verla and Marcello Fogolino. Among these studies, a wider approach to the artist has been taken by Elizabeth Carroll, who, in her doctoral thesis, aside from discussing Montagna's style, patronage and overlooked contribution to the *sacra conversazione* type, has dedicated a brief chapter to his role as artist from the periphery.⁷ In drawing on Jan Bialostocki's idea that artists from provincial territories had freedom of choice inasmuch as they were not exposed to the

⁵ In this thesis I shall use the term "income" with reference to the payments in cash or kind received by Montagna from artistic commissions and real estate activities.

⁶ Lionello Puppi, *Bartolomeo Montagna* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1962), p. 21; Franco Barbieri, *Pittori di Vicenza, 1480-1520: Bartolomeo e Benedetto Montagna, Giovanni Buonconsiglio, Giovanni Speranza, Francesco Verla, Marcello Fogolino, Girolamo di Stefano, Giacomo da Vicenza, Girolamo Dal Toso* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1982, 2nd edition, first published 1981), p. 9; Elizabeth Carroll, 'Bartolomeo Montagna (1459-1523): Civic and Artistic Identity in Early Sixteenth-Century Vicenza,' Ph.D. thesis (Indiana University 2006), p. 4; Gabriele Neher, 'Verona and Vicenza,' in *Venice and the Veneto*, ed. Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 254-258. In particular, Carroll argues that "Previous to Montagna, there was no definitive Vicentine School of painting in the Quattrocento" (p. 4), while Puppi maintains that "A Vicenza non si determinò, almeno fino al XV secolo avanzato - cioè proprio a Bartolomeo Montagna e la sua bottega - una duratura tradizione artistica, una *scuola* individuabile e definibile, dotata di sue espressioni peculiari, di un suo linguaggio figurativo e di un suo coerente sviluppo." (p. 21).

⁷ Carroll (2006), pp. 171-177.

burdensome artistic tradition of metropolitan centres,⁸ Carroll has emphasised Montagna's openness to various impulses. Her approach stands out as a valuable attempt to throw light on Vicenza as a receptive environment and on Montagna's stylistic diversity, based on the combination of Venetian luminous tones and Paduan Squarcionesque-Mantegnesque harsh linear style.⁹ Carroll has thus challenged the assessment of Montagna's pictorial manner in light of a merely Venetian stylistic influence put forward by Bernard Berenson, Creighton Gilbert and Sidney Freedberg.¹⁰ She has also underlined that the bold handling of colour characterising his altarpieces painted in the years 1500-1515, and the dark and almost eerie mood of his altarpieces of the 1510s, such as *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Peter, John the Baptist, Catherine, Paul and Busts of Lawrence and Francis* for Santa Maria in Vanzo in Padua [Fig. 4], differ from the calmness of the altarpieces painted by Giovanni Bellini, Alvise Vivarini and Vittore Carpaccio.¹¹ In other words, Carroll must be given credit for pointing out that Montagna's late works are proof of his attempt to distance his own pictorial language from that of his Venetian peers. Even so, Carroll has taken a Venice-oriented perspective in her analysis of Montagna's four major altarpieces, the aforementioned altarpieces for the Trento and Porto Pagello Chapels in San Bartolomeo, *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Andrew, Monica, Ursula, Sigismund and Three Musical Angels* for the Squarzi Chapel in San Michele in Vicenza, and the altarpiece of *St Mary Magdalen*

⁸ Jan Bialostocki, 'Some Values of Artistic Periphery,' in *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity: Acts of the XXVIth International Congress of the History of Art*, ed. Irving Lavin, 3 vols (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1989), vol. 1, p. 52; Carroll (2006), pp. 3-4.

⁹ Carroll (2006), p. 172.

¹⁰ Bernard Berenson, *The Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906, 3rd edition, first published 1894); Creighton Gilbert, 'Alvise e compagni,' in *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Lionello Venturi*, 2 vols (Rome: De Luca, 1956), vol. 1, pp. 277-308; Sydney Joseph Freedberg, *Painting in Italy 1500-1600* (London: Penguin Books, 1990, 2nd edition, first published 1970).

¹¹ Carroll (2006), pp. 172-173.

Enthroned with Sts Jerome, Paula (?), Monica and Augustine for the Porto-Pagello altar in the Dominican church of Santa Corona in Vicenza [Figs 1-2, 5-6]. The “venetianness” of these works lies, according to Carroll, in Montagna’s use of Carpaccio’s saturated red tones and assimilation of Giovanni Bellini’s light and graphic *chiaroscuro*. Her contention is that the *venezianità* of Montagna’s style is a sign of Venetian hegemony as much as the submission of the Vicentine local government to the political authority of Venice.¹² Yet I believe that, by stressing her idea of Venetian hegemony, Carroll has failed to consider the peculiarity of Montagna’s critical adaptation of Venetian and non-Venetian models. One of the principal aims of my thesis is to highlight Montagna’s individual agency and gauge the extent to which he departed from the known pattern, especially when he absorbed a Venetian prototype. I shall analyse Montagna’s paintings which best exemplify George Kubler’s idea that invention occurs whenever variation prevails over faithful copying, such as the altarpieces for the Trento and Aurifici Chapels in San Bartolomeo and the *Noli Me Tangere*, painted in the early 1490s for the church of San Lorenzo in Vicenza and now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin [Figs 2-3, 7].¹³ Montagna’s capability of reworking the model is particularly striking in the *Trento Altarpiece*, in which he appears to have deliberately shunned the flat arrangement of the figures in the foreground of his prototype, Giovanni Bellini’s *St Catherine of Siena Altarpiece* [Fig. 8].¹⁴ Montagna creatively combined the chapel-like architecture with cross vault of Bellini’s altarpiece with the perspective

¹² Ibid., pp. 150, 169-170.

¹³ George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 72.

¹⁴ Bellini’s altarpiece, destroyed by a fire in 1867, is reproduced by an engraving made by Francesco Zanotto in 1858 [Fig. 8]. On this painting, see Carlo Corsato, ‘Bellini ‘800. Il restauro della pala di Santa Caterina già ai Santi Giovanni e Paolo,’ *Arte Veneta* 68 (2011), pp. 323-327.

arrangement of the figure group in Antonello da Messina's *San Cassiano Altarpiece* [Fig. 9]. This is a glaring example of Montagna's original handling of artistic otherness, through which he created the illusion of pictorial depth and directed the viewer's attention to the Virgin and Child enthroned. In other words, the layouts of two prestigious models have been adjusted by Montagna to his realistic treatment of the pictorial space in the *Trento Altarpiece*. Similarly, Licisco Magagnato argued that Montagna's true-to-life depiction of the pictorial space differed from the unreal depiction of architectural spaces in the background of Carpaccio's paintings.¹⁵

If Montagna's works for public worship have been widely examined, his private devotional paintings of the Virgin and Child are still understudied. In spite of the plethora of Virgin and Child pictures ascribed to the master and his workshop, a thorough study of the connection between the technical and compositional elements of these works and their commissioning process and provenance is still missing. Scholars have mainly attempted to assign a precise chronology or discern the hand of the master from that of his workshop assistants through stylistic comparisons. This is not to say that scholars should not reconstruct the chronological order in which these paintings were executed. Nor should they fail to pinpoint and stress the stylistic differences between an original and its copies, or within the same work. Yet my goal is to discuss the marketing strategies of Montagna's workshop, whose paintings I have regarded as commodities. Despite the paucity of scholarship on this type of private devotional imagery, I will discuss works potentially made on commission and those likely made for speculative sale. More precisely, I mean

¹⁵ Licisco Magagnato, 'Il momento architettonico di tre pittori veneti del tardo Quattrocento,' *Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio* 6 (1964), pp. 228-238. See also Lucco (2014), p. 52.

to pin down and scrutinise aspects of Montagna's serial production of private devotional paintings which are critical to our understanding of his response to an existing market demand.

These issues are discussed in three chapters. Chapter One focuses on the limits of modern scholarship's use of a Venice-oriented approach to *terraferma* artists, and on the origins of this approach in Venetian art theory of the Cinquecento and Seicento. I stress the artistic centrality of Renaissance Vicenza in the Venetian mainland by discussing and commenting on the centre-periphery theories of Jan Bialostocki, Enrico Castelnuovo and Nicolas Bock.¹⁶ I appraise Montagna's mobility by availing myself of published archival documents on both his artistic and real estate activities. Last but not least, I pinpoint some peculiar aspects of Montagna's art, such as his active response to artistic otherness resulting from his critical independence and his commissioners' aesthetic needs and taste.

Chapter Two is a study of Montagna as a devotional painter. The central themes are the religious and socioeconomic context of private devotional paintings in Renaissance Veneto, and the serial production of Virgin and Child paintings in Montagna's workshop. I also zero in on the technical, stylistic and iconographic elements of these paintings which are indicative of Montagna's understanding of and response to the art market¹⁷ demand. Finally, I seek to

¹⁶ Bialostocki (1989), pp. 46-47, 52; Nicolas Bock, 'Center or Periphery, Artistic Migration, Models, Taste and Standards,' in *Napoli è tutto il mondo: Neapolitan Art and Culture from Humanism to the Enlightenment*, eds Livio Pestilli, Ingrid D. Rowland and Sebastian Schütze (Pisa-Rome: Fabrizio Serra editore, 2008), pp. 28, 33; Id., 'Patronage, Standards and *Transfert Culturel*: Naples between Art History and Social Science Theory,' in *Art and Architecture in Naples, 1266-1713*, eds Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliott (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 165, 170.

¹⁷ For a useful definition of "art market," see: Peter Burke, *Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy 1420-1540* (London: Batsford, 1972), pp. 75-76, 105. In particular, Burke has described the market as the system "in which the artist or writer produces something 'ready-made' and seeks to sell it, either directly to the public or through a dealer" and "where clients do not commission works at all, but buy them 'ready-made,' possibly through a middleman." See also Guido Guerzoni, *Apollo e Vulcano. I mercati artistici in Italia (1400-1700)* (Venice: Marsilio, 2006).

distinguish potentially commissioned works from paintings likely made for speculative sale.

In Chapter Three I assess the influence of landownership on Montagna's socioeconomic status through analysis of the historical and economic context of Renaissance Vicenza, of the painter's family and social ties with individuals from different social classes, and of his strong connection with the Vicentino. I also highlight the artist's business acumen by reconstructing his investment trends and scrutinising his money-lending activity, which I contrast with the lending policies of the Jews and the Monti di Pietà.

CHAPTER ONE

MONTAGNA'S ARTISTIC GEOGRAPHY: VENICE AND THE *TERRAFERMA*

Chapter One focuses on the centre-periphery debate and Montagna's artistic geography,¹ and is divided into four sections, preceded by a brief biographical outline of Montagna's life. In Section Two I reconstruct the origins of a Venice-oriented approach to *terraferma* artists by showing the extent to which the notions of "centre" and "maniera moderna" in Venetian art theory of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries permeated modern scholarship. Section Three is concerned with the centrality of Renaissance Vicenza in the Venetian mainland. In keeping with Nicolas Bock's centre-periphery theory,² I throw light on the cultural enrichment of Vicenza through the intentional importation of foreign artists and works of art, which had fostered the city's centrality in the Veneto since the fourteenth century. I therefore challenge the urban-centred regional geography focused merely on Venice that has influenced studies on the artistic centres of the *terraferma* since the late nineteenth century. In Section Four I discuss Montagna's mobility in light of both his artistic and real estate activities. His Brescian origins, his almost regular presence in Vicenza and the Vicentino, and his travels to Venice, Verona and Padua are the central themes of this section. In the last section I highlight key aspects of Montagna's art, such as eclecticism, variation

¹ An accurate definition of this concept is found in Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 22: "[...] artistic geography may be described as an account in which location or place of origin becomes an important issue in the distinctive characterization of the work of art, not just a chance or random fact; place may even be established as a determining factor in the existence or appearance of an art work."

² Bock (2008), pp. 28, 33; Id. (2010), pp. 165, 170.

and invention, and of his commissioners, particularly their aesthetic needs and taste.

1.1 Montagna's Life

Bartolomeo Cincani, also known as Montagna, was born to Antonio Cincani³ probably around 1447 in Biron, a suburb of Vicenza, although both his birthplace and date of birth are still a moot point. If Lionello Puppi claimed that Montagna was born almost certainly in Biron,⁴ Elizabeth Carroll has hypothesised that Montagna was a native of Orzinuovi, on the grounds that in a notarial deed dated 13 July 1451⁵ we read the names “Ser Betinus q. Pauli di Cinchanis et Bartholemeus filius ser Tonini qui fuerunt de Urceis novis districtus Brissie et habitatores de preseti in contraia de Birone Vincentini districtus [...]”⁶ Another notarial deed drafted on 15 July 1451, in fact, states that Antonio Nicolò Loschi had received some money from “ser Betino de Cinchanis et Bartholomeo filio et procuratori ser Tonini d’Hospitaleto Vincentini districtus, de Urceis Novis, districtus Brissie [...]”⁷ This document therefore makes clear that the Bartolomeo mentioned by Loschi is not Bartolomeo Montagna, as understood by Carroll, but a different Bartolomeo, who, as pointed out by Manuela Barausse,⁸ is the son of Antonio da Ospedaletto. Given that Montagna’s father Antonio Cincani is usually described in archival documents as “Antonii de Cincanis de Urceis Novis, districtus Bresie,”⁹ or as “Antonii Zanchani de Urceis Novis,”¹⁰ that is Antonio Cincani da Orzinuovi, Antonio da Ospedaletto, a village near Vicenza, cannot

³ Tancred Borenius, *I pittori di Vicenza 1480-1550* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1909), p. 215.

⁴ Puppi (1962), p. 19 note 1.

⁵ Carroll (2006), pp. 18, 26.

⁶ ASVi, *Notarile, Giacomo Ferretto*, b. 4582, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 87, 100; Carroll (2006), p. 26; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 102.

⁷ ASVi, *Notarile, Giacomo Ferretto*, b. 4582, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 87, 100; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 102.

⁸ Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 102.

⁹ ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 106.

¹⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Daniele Ferretto*, b. 4618, anno 1469, fols 23v-24, 31r-32r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102-103; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 106-108.

be Montagna's father. In addition, the document drafted on 15 July 1451 specifies that Bartolomeo acted as a proctor of Tonino, which Montagna could not have been in that year, when he was probably only four years old. It is indeed likely that, as noted by Mauro Lucco, Montagna had just turned twenty years old, the legal age to buy and sell real estate in Vicenza according to Puppi,¹¹ when, on 31 January 1467, his brothers sold 25 *campi* in Biron on his behalf to Alvise Antonio Loschi (App. 4, doct 5).¹² However, Montagna's *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Sebastian and Roch*, painted in 1487 and now in the Accademia Carrara of Bergamo, poses the question of whether Montagna was Brescian [Fig. 10]. This hypothesis stems from the presence of an inscription on the back of the altarpiece, according to Laura De Zuani almost certainly contemporary,¹³ which reads as follows: "M.r Bartholomeus Montagna Brixianus: habitator Vicentiae: hunc/ depinxit. M.ro Hieronimo roberto Brixiano civi et h[ab]itatori ibidem./ de ms septe[m]br[is] 1487 p[ro] lib[er] 13 cum dimidia planet." The expression "habitor Vicentiae" is found in various documents citing Montagna, while the adjective "Brixianus" is ambiguous, given that the artist is typically described in the documents as "cive et habitore Vicentie quondam Antonii de Zanchanis ab Urcis Novis..."¹⁴ In other words, it is not Montagna but his father, Antonio, who is said to be from Orzinuovi. If the term "Brixianus" in the inscription on the back of the Carrara altarpiece has recently led De Zuani to assume that the painter was

¹¹ Lionello Puppi, 'Postilla montagnesca: una questione di metodo,' *Arte Veneta* 22 (1968), p. 219.

¹² ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 106.

¹³ De Zuani (2015), p. 75.

¹⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Giovanni Antonio Gallo*, b. 5042, fol. 55, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 109.

born in Orzinuovi,¹⁵ it does not dispel my doubts on the painter's place of birth, as it may simply point to his Brescian origins.¹⁶

Montagna is first recorded in Vicenza in 1474, as proven by a notarial deed drafted on 28 August,¹⁷ although he is also mentioned in two earlier documents, drafted on 31 January 1467 and on 30 January 1469. The former relates that his brothers Giovanni, Paolo and Francesco Cincani sold 25 *campi* in Biron to Alvise Antonio Loschi on the painter's behalf (App. 4, doct 5),¹⁸ while the latter records that his brothers divided up their family heritage and that Montagna was in Venice (App. 4, doct 6).¹⁹ During his stay in Venice in 1469, Montagna might have been apprenticed to Giovanni Bellini's workshop,²⁰ whereas in Vicenza he might initially have trained in the workshop of Gianfrancesco Somaio,²¹ with whom he painted a lost altarpiece commissioned in 1476 by the canon Gaspare of Schio for the Chapel of Santi Pietro e Giustina in the cathedral of Vicenza (App. 4, doct 9).²²

After painting a lost altarpiece for the church of Piovene, near Vicenza, in 1478, and the two lost *teleri* of *The Flood* and *The Creation of the World* for the Scuola di San Marco in Venice in 1482, Montagna painted his first major

¹⁵ De Zuani (2015), p. 75.

¹⁶ ASVi, *Notarile, Bortolo Bassan*, b. 4541, fols 12v-13r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 87, 100; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 101. The Brescian origins of Montagna's family are clear in a passage of this document, drafted on 29 May 1442, which reads as follows: "[...] ser Betinus Cincan quondam ser Pauli de Urceis Novis, Brixienis districtus [...]" Therefore, Bettino Cincani, Montagna's paternal uncle, is described as the son of the late Paolo Cincani, Montagna's paternal grandfather, who is said to be from Orzinuovi.

¹⁷ ASVi, *Notarile, Antonio Sarasin*, b. 4970, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 89 note 6; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Lucco (2014), p. 108. The painter had resided in Vicenza since 1474, according to Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 97.

¹⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 106.

¹⁹ ASVi, *Notarile, Daniele Ferretto*, b. 4618, anno 1469, fols 23v-24, 31r-32r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102-103; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 106-108.

²⁰ Luigi Coletti, *Pittura veneta del Quattrocento* (Novara: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1953), p. 67; Puppi (1962), p. 31.

²¹ De Zuani (2015), p. 25.

²² ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Malo*, b. 4643, cited in Giovanni Mantese, 'Notizie intorno a tre opere d'arte perdute,' in *Studi in onore di Antonio Bardella*, ed. Marcella Bardella (Vicenza: Scuola Tipografica dell'Istituto San Gaetano, 1964a), pp. 248-249 doct 1.

altarpieces for San Bartolomeo in Vicenza between 1484 and 1485: *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child with Sts Monica and Mary Magdalen* for the Porto Pagello Chapel, and *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist, Bartholomew, Augustine, Sebastian and Three Musical Angels* for the Trento Chapel [Figs 1-2]. In the 1480s he also painted in Vicenza *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Nicholas of Bari and Lucy* for Santa Maria dei Servi, *The Virgin and Child with Sts Onuphrius and John the Baptist* for San Michele, and *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Francis and Bernardino of Siena* for Santi Bernardino e Chiara [Figs 11-13].

In 1490 the painter made his only known work for a site located outside the Veneto, the altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist, Jerome and Three Musical Angels*, commissioned by the Carthusian monks for the Pavia Certosa [Fig. 14]. After this commission, Montagna painted altarpieces and frescoes only in the Venetian mainland. In the 1490s he carried out three prestigious commissions in Vicenza: the lost fresco of the *Adoration of the Child with Saints and the Donor Pietro Proti* for the Proti Chapel in the cathedral, made in 1495-1496 [Fig. 15]; the *Squarzi Altarpiece* for San Michele, painted between 1496 and 1499 [Fig. 5]; and the altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child with Saints*, commissioned in 1499 for the cathedral of Vicenza by the archdeacon Graziadio Bonafino and the chamberlain Leonardo of Ancona, both acting on behalf of the bishop of Vicenza Giovanni Battista Zeno [Fig. 16].

In the 1500s and 1510s, Montagna worked not only in Vicenza and the Vicentino, but also in Verona and the Veronese, and Padua. In the Vicentino he painted the altarpieces for San Marco in Lonigo,²³ Santi Apostoli Simone e

²³ On this altarpiece, see Elizabeth Carroll, 'La pala ritrovata. Una rivisitazione della pala d'altare di Bartolomeo Montagna già nella chiesa di San Marco a Lonigo,' *Arte documento* 20 (2004), pp. 112-117.

Giuda in Cartigliano, and the parish churches of Orgiano and Sarmego di Grumolo delle Abbadesse, while in the Veronese he made an altarpiece for San Giovanni Battista in San Giovanni Ilarione [Figs 17-21]. In Verona, between 1504 and 1506, he frescoed the *Scenes from the Life of St Blaise* for the San Biagio Chapel in the church of SS. Nazaro e Celso, where in the early 1490s he had also painted a polyptych for the main altar; in Padua, in 1506 he frescoed one hundred portraits of Paduan bishops in the Palazzo Vescovile, in 1512 he made the fresco of *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone* for the Scuola del Santo, and, probably in the same years, he also painted an altarpiece for Santa Maria in Vanzo [Figs 4, 22-24]. In Vicenza Montagna received three other important commissions: the *Mary Magdalen Enthroned with Sts Jerome, Paula (?), Monica and Augustine* for the Porto-Pagello altar in Santa Corona, made between 1507 and 1514 [Fig. 6]; the *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple with Donor* for the Aurifici Chapel in San Bartolomeo, made between 1515 and 1520 [Fig. 3]; and the *Madonna Enthroned with Child between SS. Mary Magdalen and Lucy* for the Chapel of Santa Caterina in the cathedral, dated around 1520.

Montagna painted his last documented altarpiece between 1520 and 1522 for the cathedral of Cologna Veneta, near Verona, at the request of the Scuola di San Giuseppe [Fig. 25]. He died on 11 October 1523, as specified by the notary Francesco Zanechini in the painter's second will, drafted on 6 May 1523 (App. 4, doct 72).²⁴

²⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5390, anno 1523, fol. 82, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 49-50; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 171-173 doct 42; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 153-154.

1.2 The Influence of the Notions of “Centre” and “Maniera Moderna” on the Assessment of the Art of the *Terraferma*

This section is aimed at pinpointing the notions of “centre” and “maniera moderna” in Venetian art theory of the Cinquecento and Seicento that may have had an impact on scholars’ assessment of Renaissance artists from Venice and the Venetian mainland. I shall reconstruct the origins of scholars’ Venice-oriented approach to art and show the extent to which it may have affected our understanding of the art of the *terraferma*, notably of Montagna’s late works.

Art historians have long highlighted the waning of Montagna’s late artistic career. Adolfo Venturi was one of the first scholars to do so by arguing that, in his attempt to compete with modern painters and his vain search for grace, the artist painted figures that lacked their original sturdiness and works that took on a “disheartening look of senility.”²⁵ Three decades later, Roberto Longhi maintained that Montagna’s late style, especially in the *Squarzi Altarpiece* [Fig. 5], painted between 1496 and 1499, and in *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist and Simon the Apostle*, painted between 1507 and 1510 for the parish church of Santi Apostoli Simone e Giuda in Cartigliano [Fig. 18], “plunged later into a soft materialisation of the Antonellesque manner.” Longhi added that the artist’s “attempt to regain consistency in the Monte Berico *Pietà* [Fig. 26], painted in 1500, is very noble, but it does not seem to have been entirely accomplished.”²⁶ Luigi Coletti described Montagna’s late

²⁵ Adolfo Venturi, ‘Bartolomeo Montagna,’ in *Storia dell’arte italiana. La pittura del Quattrocento*, 11 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1915), vol. 7:4, pp. 498, 500: “La brama del nuovo, prima rivolta alla piena espressione di un’ideale schietto, rusticano, potente, s’indirizza poi alla gara coi pittori contemporanei, perdendo la nativa robustezza. [...] Negli ultimi anni le opere prendono un desolante aspetto di senilità, e nella vana ricerca di grazia sfiorisce l’arte [...]”

²⁶ Roberto Longhi, *Viatico per cinque secoli di pittura veneziana* (Florence: Sansoni, 1946), pp. 14-15: “[...] scade più tardi in una lieve materializzazione dell’antonellismo, come già si accenna nel 1498 entro la pala di Brera e, qui alla Mostra, in quella di Cartigliano. Il tentativo di rifarsi

artistic production as “tired and monotonous,” and as the consequence of “a manneristic decline typical of many of these provincial painters.”²⁷ Almost a decade later, Lionello Puppi spoke about “the drama of the provincial,” and about Montagna’s inability “to keep abreast of the rapid succession of the linguistic and formal proposals of the most updated trends of Venetian painting.”²⁸ In line with Puppi’s view, Franco Barbieri maintained that “after all, the rest is rather dismal; and sometimes it verges on catastrophe, as Montagna, around and after 1510, lacked the resources of Buonconsiglio’s bold eclecticism [...]”²⁹ Mauro Lucco has recently pointed out that Puppi and Barbieri “essentially interpret Montagna’s entire career after around 1490-92 as an uninterrupted crisis, at times mitigated by some spells of greater eloquence.”³⁰ However, Puppi’s and Barbieri’s dismissive viewpoints have found an echo in Lucco’s evaluation of Montagna’s late paintings, particularly the *Cartigliano Altarpiece*. Lucco has contended that Montagna’s style began to appear retardataire around 1507, when Giorgione took up the *maniera moderna*, and that the *Cartigliano Altarpiece* shows “the repetitive assembling of outdated elements.”³¹

vivo e coerente nella “Pietà” di Monte Berico, che è del 1500, è nobilissimo ma non sembra completamente riuscito [...]”

²⁷ Coletti (1953), p. 74: “La produzione del Montagna, che si inoltra quasi un quarto di secolo nel Cinquecento, stanca e monotona, risente di un processo di involuzione manieristica comune a molti di questi pittori di provincia.”

²⁸ Puppi (1962), p. 64: “[...] il dramma del provinciale, incapace di tener dietro al vertiginoso susseguirsi di proposte linguistiche ed espressive delle correnti più avanzate della pittura veneziana.”

²⁹ Barbieri (1982), p. 64: “Del resto, il seguito è piuttosto penoso; e rasenta talvolta la catastrofe, mancando al Montagna, verso e dopo il 1510, anche le risorse di spregiudicato eclettismo messe in atto dal Buonconsiglio [...]. Quando egli ritornerà in S. Bortolo, teatro delle sue «antiche» glorie degli anni ottanta, per collocare nella cappella degli Orefice, seconda da destra, circa lo scadere del terzo lustro del Cinquecento, la *Presentazione al Tempio*, ora al Museo Civico, sarà facile avvedersi che il «salto di qualità», l’ingresso di una piena dimensione cinquecentesca, deve dirsi mancato.”

³⁰ Lucco (2014), p. 74: “[...] sostanzialmente leggono tutta la carriera dell’artista dopo il 1490-92 circa come una ininterrotta crisi, a volte attenuata da qualche momento di maggiore efficacia espressiva.”

³¹ Ibid., pp. 80-81.

This negative appraisal of Montagna's late works results from scholars' tendency to compare the style of non-Venetian artists with the *maniera moderna* introduced by Giorgione and developed by Sebastiano del Piombo and Titian in Venice. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that, as early as the nineteenth century, some scholars expressed their appreciation for Montagna's late paintings. The abbot Luigi Lanzi and Stefano Ticozzi underlined his great mastery of perspective in the *Squarzi Altarpiece* [Fig. 5].³² Likewise, Crowe and Cavalcaselle praised his *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple with Donor* [Fig. 3], painted between 1515 and 1520 for the Aurifici Chapel in San Bartolomeo in Vicenza, for its "great mastery in the intertress [sic!] of contrasted tints and the balance of light and shade."³³ Twentieth-century scholars' undermining stances on Montagna's late works call to memory a widespread bias of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art critics towards a Venice-oriented view of art. These scholars' ideas are symptomatic of a general tendency for studies to focus on large urban centres – notably Venice, Florence and Rome – and their flagship artists, such as Titian and Michelangelo. This tendency is mostly reminiscent of the Vasarian, Tuscan-oriented dominance, whose balance twentieth-century scholars sought to redress by placing emphasis on Venetian art. The focus on artistic production in Venice, which can be hailed as a side-effect of repositioning the canon of art history, has led scholars to neglect art produced in smaller centres of the *terraferma*. It is no wonder that large artistic and economically powerful cities, such as Venice, Florence and Rome, exerted a

³² Luigi Lanzi, *Storia pittorica della Italia dal Risorgimento delle belle arti fin presso al fine del XVIII secolo dell'Ab. Luigi Lanzi, antiquario I. e R. in Firenze*, ed. Martino Capucci (Florence: Sansoni, 1968-1974, first published 1795-1796), p. 37; Stefano Ticozzi, *Dizionario degli architetti, scultori, pittori, intagliatori in rame ed in pietra, coniatori di medaglie, musaicisti, niellatori, intarsiatori di ogni età e di ogni nazione di Stefano Ticozzi*, 4 vols (Milan: Gaetano Schiepatti, 1830-1833), vol. 2, pp. 469 ff.

³³ Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in North Italy. Venice, Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Ferrara, Milan, Friuli, Brescia. From the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1912, 2nd edition, first published 1871), vol. 2, p. 134.

pull on some of the most remarkable Renaissance artists. This thread of interpretation, however, fails to consider that urban centres of the Venetian mainland could equally appeal to first-rate artists, as proven by the prestigious artistic commissions received by Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano in Vicenza in the late fifteenth century (a point to which I shall return). A reappraisal of smaller centres that were economically weaker than Venice and characterised by less selective artistic competition is key to our understanding of Vicenza as one of the seminal artistic hubs in Renaissance Veneto. This reappraisal calls for a reconstruction of the origins of a Venice-oriented view of art through a critical analysis of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources on Venetian art.

The first literary work that is worth mentioning is Paolo Pino's *Dialogue on Painting*, which was published in 1548, a few years before Vasari's *Lives* (first published 1550) and Ludovico Dolce's *Dialogue on Painting* (1557). In Pino's *Dialogue*, the Venetian Lauro maintains that both Michelangelo and Titian are the greatest painters, as Michelangelo's draughtsmanship and Titian's colour would, if combined, bring the "god of painting" into being. Pino's Venice-oriented approach to art is manifest in the *Dialogue* in his appreciation for the artistic activity of Giovanni Antonio de' Sacchis, also known as Pordenone, in Venice, where the painter is said to have had the opportunity to absorb a more modern manner.³⁴ Pino's assessment of Pordenone's art in relation to Venice finds an echo in Philip Rylands' overall negative account of Palma Vecchio's *Death of St Peter Martyr* of Alzano Lombardo, painted in the years 1527-28 [Fig. 27]. Rylands has underlined the absence of *chiaroscuro* and the hardness of the figures, while contending that "only when compared with Titian's altarpiece of

³⁴ Paolo Pino, *Dialogo di pittura*, ed. Susanna Falabella (Rome: Lithos, 2000, first published 1548), pp. 57, 66, 121-122.

the same subject for Santi Giovanni e Paolo does Palma seem timid and provincial.”³⁵ Therefore, Titian’s cutting-edge creations in Venice function as paradigms against which a non-Venetian painter is pitted. Needless to say, this comparison results in a strengthening of Titian’s art and an undermining interpretation of Palma’s late pictorial style, particularly with regards to his works of art for the *terraferma*. By comparing Palma’s *Alzano Lombardo Altarpiece* to Titian’s *Death of St Peter Martyr* [Fig. 28], Rylands has highlighted Palma’s inability to achieve Titian’s balanced merging of the landscape in the backdrop with the narrative staged in the foreground. In line with Rylands, Susanna Falabella has stressed the retardataire style of Palma’s work, which she has described as an “archaic and provincial performance.”³⁶ This regressive idiom is held to be the result of the painter’s unsuccessful attempt to keep abreast of the versions painted by Titian and Pordenone in the 1526 competition for the *Death of St Peter Martyr* to be installed in the Venetian Basilica of Santi Giovanni e Paolo. Like Rylands, Falabella has benchmarked Palma’s altarpiece in Alzano Lombardo, a small village near Bergamo, against a painting made by Titian in Venice. Notwithstanding the weaknesses detected by scholars in the *Alzano Lombardo Altarpiece*, various elements show Palma’s mastery in this work: the liveliness of the figures, which are shown from different angles; the skilled use of the brush; and the brightness of colour. In addition, Rylands has stressed that the scene of the assassination of the saint, usually confined to the predella, has been depicted in the main panel.³⁷ All these peculiarities run counter to Rylands’ and Falabella’s undermining interpretations of Palma’s altarpiece. Pino’s Venice-oriented approach to the art of Pordenone, which finds an echo

³⁵ Philip Rylands, *Palma Vecchio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 2nd edition, first published 1988), pp. 63-64.

³⁶ Pino (2000), pp. 80-81 note 159.

³⁷ Rylands (1992), p. 62.

in Rylands' and Falabella's analyses of Palma's altarpiece, suggests that Montagna has suffered from a fate similar to these painters. A case in point is Puppi's contention that the stylistic regression of Montagna's *Santa Maria in Vanzo Altarpiece* [Fig. 4], painted between 1512 and 1514 according to the scholar,³⁸ resulted from the vanishing effects of Titian's style on the painter.³⁹

The second literary source that has shaped the making of a Venice-oriented scholarship is Ludovico Dolce's *Dialogue on Painting* (1557), from which two major aspects emerge: the celebration of Venice and of Titian's close ties to the city. In the *Dialogue*, Pietro Aretino heaps praise upon Venice by quoting an epigram, written by the Neapolitan poet Jacopo Sannazzaro, that runs as follows: *Great men built Rome, but Venice was built by Gods*.⁴⁰ Titian's strong link to Venice is emphasised by Dolce's erroneous remark that the painter never wished to leave the city,⁴¹ which further proves the author's focus on Venice. Dolce, through Aretino's words, gives Andrea Navagero credit for succeeding in preventing Titian, who is extolled with respect to Venice as "one of its greatest adornments," from heading to Rome at Pope Leo X's invitation. Invention, draughtsmanship and colouring, the three elements characterising painting according to Aretino, are brought to perfection by Titian, so much so that the artist "moves in step with nature, so that every one of his figures has life, movement and flesh which palpitates."⁴² In a letter of July 1550, Aretino makes clear that Giovanni Bellini was the main representative of the outmoded

³⁸ Lionello Puppi, 'Un'integrazione al catalogo e al regesto di Bartolomeo Montagna,' *Antichità viva* 14:3 (1975), p. 24.

³⁹ Puppi (1962), pp. 67-68: "Nel passaggio, avvenuto probabilmente in breve lasso di tempo, dai quadretti che abbiamo raccolto intorno all'affresco della Scuola del Santo, alla pala di S. Maria in Vanzo, vien da pensare si compisse il dramma dell'artista. Venuta meno la presenza illuminante e stimolante di Tiziano [...]." (p. 68).

⁴⁰ Mark W. Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 125-127.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 332.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 185, 191-193.

fifteenth-century pictorial idiom.⁴³ Correspondingly, in Dolce's *Dialogue*, Aretino contends that Bellini was a "good and diligent master" outclassed by Giorgione, who was in turn outdistanced by the art of Titian. Late Quattrocento Venetian paintings, particularly the "dead and cold creations of Giovanni Bellini, Gentile and Vivarino," are said by Aretino to lack movement and perfection.⁴⁴ Similarly, Francesco Sansovino maintained that these creations had neither softness nor much relief.⁴⁵ Dolce's stress on the artistic hegemony of Venice and Titian calls to mind Vasari's focus on the Tuscan/Roman Renaissance and on its chief representatives, Raphael and Michelangelo, who are celebrated for the unsurpassed greatness of their art.⁴⁶ Dolce's undermining view of late fifteenth-century Venetian art and strong emphasis on sixteenth-century Venetian painting foreshadows scholarship's criticism of Montagna's art. Indeed, Lucco's conviction that Montagna's style began to appear retardataire around 1507, when Giorgione took up the *maniera moderna*, mirrors Dolce's standpoint. Dolce, through Aretino's words, contrasts Titian's *maniera moderna* with the outmoded (*dead*) manner of late Quattrocento painters, such as the Bellini and the Vivarini. Likewise, Lucco has pitted Giorgione's *maniera moderna* against Montagna's late paintings, which are deemed a by-product of the artistic delay of the Venetian mainland. Lucco's belittlement of Montagna's late works results in the painter being confined to the "rough ages" discussed by Dolce through Aretino's statements.⁴⁷ Yet the use of Giorgione's modern manner as a paradigm against which artistic quality

⁴³ Pietro Aretino, *Lettere sull'arte*, ed. Ettore Camesasca, 4 vols (Milan: Edizioni del Milione, 1957-60), vol. 2, pp. 338-339.

⁴⁴ Roskill (2000), pp. 85, 187-188.

⁴⁵ Francesco Sansovino, *Delle cose notabili che sono in Venetia libri due* (Venice: per Comin da Trino, 1561), p. 17r.

⁴⁶ Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, 9 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1906, 1568 edition), vol. 4, p. 383; vol. 7, p. 269.

⁴⁷ Roskill (2000), pp. 115-117.

is measured is not limited to studies on Montagna's art. Lionello Venturi long categorised Bernardino Licinio, a Venetian-born painter of Bergamasque origins, as a "ridiculous little painter" and an "outdated Giorgionesque."⁴⁸ Following the same line, Rodolfo Pallucchini and Pietro Zampetti have positively assessed those works by Licinio, especially portraits, which feature Giorgionesque themes, mood, and soft tonalism.⁴⁹

Another highly influential source in the historiography of Venetian art is Carlo Ridolfi's *Le Maraviglie dell'Arte ovvero le Vite degli Illustri Pittori Veneti e dello Stato*, published in 1648.⁵⁰ A careful reading of this work helps account for the origins of a Venice-oriented view in scholarship, while bringing to light a burgeoning dismissive approach to Giovanni Bellini's manner and to late fifteenth-century Venetian art more generally. As seen in Dolce's *Dialogue on Painting*, in the "Life of Titian," which is the core of the *Maraviglie dell'Arte*, Ridolfi undermines Giovanni Bellini's idiom by underlining "the obstacles standing between Bellini's style and what is natural." The biographer goes on to say that Titian improved upon the style of his first master Giovanni Bellini and eventually surpassed it through a more true-to-life manner.⁵¹ This assertion makes clear that a change of manner marked a turning point in Titian's artistic career and that Giorgione's style became the inescapable paradigm for the painter. Despite the full title of Ridolfi's *Maraviglie dell'Arte* suggesting a focus on the lives and art of painters from both Venice and the *terraferma*, the work is

⁴⁸ Lionello Venturi, *Giorgione e il Giorgionismo* (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1913), p. 237. See also Karine Tsoumis, 'Bernardino Licinio: Portraiture, Kinship and Community in Renaissance Venice,' Ph.D. thesis (University of Toronto 2013), p. 18.

⁴⁹ Rodolfo Pallucchini, *La pittura veneziana del Cinquecento*, 2 vols (Novara: Istituto geografico de Agostini, 1944), vol. 1, p. 37; Pietro Zampetti, *Giorgione e i giorgioneschi* (exhibition catalogue, Palazzo Ducale, Venice, 11 June 1955 - 23 October 1955), ed. Pietro Zampetti (Venice: Arte veneta, 1955), p. 250; Tsoumis (2013), pp. 18-19.

⁵⁰ Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte ovvero le vite degli illustri pittori veneti e dello stato*, ed. Detlev Freiherrn von Hadeln (Rome: Società Multigrafica Editrice Somu, 1965, first published 1648).

⁵¹ Id., *The Life of Titian*, eds Julia Conaway Bondanella, Peter Bondanella, Bruce Cole and Jody Robin Shiffman (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), p. 59.

largely concerned with Venice. After a brief account of the origins of painting, of Greek and Roman painters, and of the mosaics in the Basilica di San Marco in Venice, Ridolfi recounts and comments on the lives and artistic careers of artists from the Venetian mainland, such as Bartolomeo and Benedetto Montagna, Marcello Fogolino and Giovanni Buonconsiglio; from other Italian regions, such as Gentile da Fabriano and Carlo Crivelli, who played a major role in the development of fifteenth-century Venetian painting; and artists from Venice, such as Jacopo, Gentile and Giovanni Bellini. Upon closer inspection of the index of Ridolfi's work, it can be noticed that the biographer dedicates only one page to Buonconsiglio and Fogolino, three to Bartolomeo and Benedetto Montagna, three to Cima da Conegliano, and six to Mantegna. By contrast, Ridolfi devotes twenty-four pages to the Bellini, of which four to Jacopo, seven to Gentile, and thirteen to Giovanni. If this confirms that interest in *terraferma* artists was rather limited, an exception is the approximate twenty pages dedicated to Pordenone.⁵² Paolo Pino's focus on Pordenone's artistic activity in Venice finds an echo in Ridolfi, despite the fact that the painter's connection with his native region of Friuli was certainly stronger than his link to Venice.⁵³ Ridolfi's twenty pages on Pordenone seem to be at odds with the meagre four on Lotto, a Venetian painter by birth, who was in fact more appreciated and sought after in and beyond the Venetian mainland than in Venice. Moreover, Pordenone is given almost the same space reserved for the Bellini, whose careers are discussed in twenty-four pages. Above all, the sixty pages dedicated to Titian's life and art indicate that Ridolfi's appreciation for Titian was not inferior to the admiration for the painter expressed by Dolce

⁵² Ridolfi (1965), pp. VI-VIII.

⁵³ On this, see Charles Cohen, *The Art of Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone: Between Dialect and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 4.

in his *Dialogue* through Aretino's words. In addition, much as Vasari lavished praise and space on Michelangelo, so too Ridolfi made Titian the peak of modern art and the heart of his *Lives*. More importantly, Ridolfi's focus on Titian reflects his strategy to counterbalance Vasari's idea of Florence as the cradle of the arts by resorting to an analogous scheme that foregrounds Venice and its artistic production.

Unlike Pino, Dolce and Ridolfi, Marco Boschini, in his *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco* published in 1660, initially gives credit to Giovanni Bellini for being one of the harbingers of the new manner. In the dialogue between "Eccellenza," a Venetian senator, and "Compare," a professor of painting, the latter maintains that Giovanni Bellini purged the Venetian style of its Gothic elements and ushered in a "first manner." Despite acknowledging Bellini's major contribution to the development of the first manner, which was for some time the "good, true and real" way followed by painters in Venice, Compare argues that "an immortal spirit," Giorgione, surpassed it. This statement stems from Boschini's idea of Bellini being outclassed by Giorgione's style, which had already been expressed by Dolce in his *Dialogue* through Aretino's remarks. Compare stresses that the world was amazed by Giorgione's realistic depiction of human figures and, more generally, by the painter's "lively painting," "done with great judgement and great common sense."⁵⁴ Anna Pallucchini's comment on Compare's belief that Giorgione had been "the first, as is known, to do marvels in Painting," deserves some attention. Pallucchini has argued that, in spite of sixteenth-century writers' focus on Titian, Boschini was able to discern and claim Giorgione's innovative manner, through which the painter brought forth "a formal and spiritual

⁵⁴ Marco Boschini, *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, ed. Anna Pallucchini (Venice: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1966, 3rd edition, first published 1660), pp. 71-72.

revolution” in Venice.⁵⁵ Even so, Boschini’s commendation of Titian’s style soon emerges from the dialogue between Compare and Eccellenza. Titian is styled by Compare as “the God of Painting,” “Real carnal brother of Nature,” and “He who carries the flag of Venice,” while being praised by Eccellenza for being “the Master that no one should dispute.” These are only some of the multiple passages which celebrate Titian, who, as pointed out by Pallucchini, inherited and brought Giorgione’s legacy to perfection. If Titian is styled “the God of Painting,” Tintoretto is, to use Compare’s words, a “demigod,” despite the fact that he is regarded as the “Monarch in draughtsmanship.”⁵⁶ Hence, Boschini’s work, as much as Pino’s, Dolce’s and Ridolfi’s, is characterised by a commendatory rhetoric aimed at highlighting Titian’s undisputed role as the painter who brought the new Venetian manner to perfection. In regard to this, Titian, alongside Tintoretto, is praised by Boschini for his final touches applied with both his fingers and brushes, which are described as a prime example of painterly *condimento* aimed at enlivening the pictorial surface and stimulating the viewer’s senses.⁵⁷

The same emphasis on Titian can be found in studies on Montagna’s works. Titian’s manner has been used by Lionello Puppi as a paradigm to judge the stylistic quality of Montagna’s *St John the Baptist*, now in the Pinacoteca Comunale of Ravenna [Fig. 29], and his *St Jerome in Bethlem* now in the Accademia Carrara of Bergamo [Fig. 30]. Montagna’s “compositional freedom” in these paintings, notably in the amplitude of the drapery and spreading out of the colours in large masses, as argued by Puppi who dated

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 56-57.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. XLVIII, 33, 37, 79, 206.

⁵⁷ Philip Sohm, *Pittoresco: Marco Boschini, His Critics, and Their Critiques of Painterly Brushwork in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 117-118.

them to 1513-1514 and 1515 respectively, is the consequence of a close observation of Titian's frescoes of *The Miracle of the Speaking Babe*, *The Miracle of the Jealous Husband*, and *The Healing of the Wrathful Son*, made in 1511 in the Scuola del Santo in Padua [Figs 31-33]. As noted earlier, Puppi also contended that the stylistic regression of Montagna's *Santa Maria in Vanzo Altarpiece* is proof of the vanishing effects of Titian's style on the painter [Fig. 4]. Puppi indeed maintained that the compositional freedom in this altarpiece was constrained by the painter's reversal to a more schematic fifteenth-century manner.⁵⁸ If this is true on a compositional level, it is not on a stylistic level, as the *Santa Maria in Vanzo Altarpiece* still retains Titian's characteristic spreading out of the colours in large masses. More importantly, the combination in this altarpiece of a Titianesque handling of colour and swelling monumentality of the figures and Montagna's sharpness and dryness of form has to be hailed as a skillful assimilation of Titian's manner.

The undisputed artistic centrality of Venice is, alongside the superiority of Titian, the leitmotif of Boschini's *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco*. In several passages of the poem, Compare underlines the paramount importance of Venice as the cradle of the new manner of painting, and of its painters. The city is described as "a Painting of polish" that mesmerises the beholder by means of its refined quality; as "the bedrock and the real light" of painting, whose power of attraction makes its beholders "slaves in chains"; and as "the mine, the fount and the river which produced or will produce with brushes the same truth." Venetian painters are praised by Compare for their "Nature,

⁵⁸ Puppi (1962) pp. 66-68, 97, 123.

Craft, and Resourcefulness,” as well as for their “much draughtsmanship,” through which they “have fashioned and coloured the good and beautiful.”⁵⁹

The origins of such a city-centred regional geography must be traced back to Vasari’s *Lives*, in which strong emphasis is placed on artists’ places of origin, on the artistic superiority of Florence and Rome, and on Florentine *disegno* and Venetian *colorito*.⁶⁰ A meaningful passage from Vasari’s *Lives* encapsulates this geographical categorisation: “Vittore Scarpaccia, Vincenzo Catena, Giovan Battista da Conegliano, Giovannetto Cordelliaghi, Marco Basarini, il Montagnana, who were Venetians, and had been dependent upon the style of Giovanni Bellini.”⁶¹ Despite Cima da Conegliano and Jacopo da Montagnana coming respectively from the Trevigiano and the Padovano, they are described by Vasari as “Venetians” and “dependent upon the style of Giovanni Bellini.” Cima and Jacopo da Montagnana are therefore associated by Vasari with Bellini and Venice.⁶² If it is true that these painters received specialised training in Venice under the leadership of Giovanni Bellini, it should be remembered that both of them spent long periods away from Venice. Indeed, Cima’s journeys to Emilia, particularly to Parma, Bologna and Carpi, alongside the commissions carried out in Padua and its environs by Jacopo da Montagnana, place into question the validity of Vasari’s use of the term “Venetians” with regards to these two artists.

⁵⁹ Boschini (1966), pp. 27-28.

⁶⁰ Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 74-105.

⁶¹ Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de’ più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a’ tempi nostri*, eds Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi (Turin: Einaudi, 1986, first published 1550), p. 529: “[...] Vittore Scarpaccia, Vincenzo Catena, Giovan Battista da Conegliano, Giovannetto Cordelliaghi, Marco Basarini, il Montagnana, che furono Veniziani, et ebbero dipendenza da la maniera di Giovan Bellino.”

⁶² David Young Kim, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Geography, Mobility, and Style* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 86.

The ideas on art put forward by the churchman Giovanni Battista Agucchi and the abbot Luigi Lanzi in the seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries, respectively, are resonant with Vasari's geographical categorisation. While the former was particularly concerned with the schools of painting of Rome, Venice, Tuscany and Lombardy, the latter focused on the art of Florence, Rome, Venice and Bologna.⁶³ Vasari therefore laid the groundwork for Venice's major role in Italian Renaissance art, but also for its "subjection" to the artistic centrality of Florence and Rome.

Given the extensive influence of Vasari's ideas since the publication of his *Lives* in 1550, and of the aforementioned treatises by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Venetian art critics, one should not be surprised by the emphasis on Venice in studies on Venetian Renaissance art. An urban-centred regional geography, with a specific focus on Venice, is found as early as the late nineteenth century in studies by Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, Giovanni Morelli and Bernard Berenson. In their work on the history of painting in northern Italy, divided into two volumes, Crowe and Cavalcaselle devoted an entire volume to painting in Venice, while Vicentine painters are discussed in thirty-three pages only, compared to approximately sixty pages dedicated to Giovanni Bellini.⁶⁴ By the same token, in his description of the paintings of the Venetian School in the Munich Gallery, Morelli specified that, in his day, the expression "Venetian School" referred not only to the art of Venice, but to "all the schools of painting in the

⁶³ Giovanni Battista Agucchi, 'Agucchi's *Trattato*,' in Denis Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971, 2nd edition, first published 1947), p. 246; Lanzi (1968-1974). See also Beverley N. Lyle, 'Peripheral Backwater or Innovative Upland? Patterns of Franciscan Patronage in Renaissance Perugia, c. 1390-1527,' Ph.D. thesis (Oxford Brookes University 2008), pp. 20-21.

⁶⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1912), vol. 1, pp. vii-viii, 139-192; vol. 2, pp. v-vi, 121-153.

territories once belonging to the Republic in North Italy [...].”⁶⁵ This Venice-oriented standpoint is similar to the perspective taken by Berenson in his work on the Venetian painters of the Renaissance, in which painters from Venice are deemed more talented than those from the Venetian mainland. His skewed assessment of provincial artists prevails even when he acknowledges the talent of an artist like Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone, whose “stamp of provincialism” Berenson regarded as an irreversible impediment which the painter did not manage to overcome during his training in Venice.⁶⁶ Berenson also gave a grim picture of Montagna by maintaining that he was “so much less enjoyable as a rule than the Venetians [...]” and that artists from the *terraferma* “are ill at ease about their art [...]. They saw greater painting than their own in Venice and Verona and not unfrequently their own works show an uncouth attempt to adopt that greatness [...]”⁶⁷ In line with Berenson’s standpoint, Creighton Gilbert argued that “a live squalor exists within Bartolomeo Montagna of another form, of another expression [...]”⁶⁸ while Sydney Joseph Freedberg branded mainland centres, such as Padua, Vicenza and Verona, as places of “relative artistic deprivation in the sixteenth century.”⁶⁹

A Venice-oriented approach to *terraferma* art underlies Elizabeth Carroll’s observations of the altarpieces painted by Montagna for the churches of San Bartolomeo, San Michele and Santa Corona in Vicenza [Figs 2, 5-6]. Carroll has argued that the painter provided his Vicentine patrons with “venetianness” by way of “the resonant Venetian luminosity and graphic *chiaroscuro* of Giovanni Bellini alongside the deeply saturated reds like his

⁶⁵ Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of Their Works. The Galleries of Munich and Dresden* (London: John Murray, 1907, 2nd edition, first published 1893), p. 3.

⁶⁶ Berenson (1906), p. 62.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

⁶⁸ Gilbert (1956), p. 299.

⁶⁹ Freedberg (1990), pp. 354-355.

contemporary, Carpaccio.”⁷⁰ Carroll’s idea of venetianness aligns with two of the principles which, according to Patricia Fortini Brown, this word encapsulates: “a chromatic richness” and “an engagement with light.”⁷¹ Both Fortini Brown’s and Carroll’s standpoints are reminiscent of Vasari’s association of Venetian painting with *colorito*, which is blatant in his life of Palma Vecchio, who came from the Bergamasque province yet is described as a “Venetian painter” skilled in colouring.⁷² This definition thus shows not only Vasari’s admiration for Palma’s mastery of colour, but also his conviction that colour was the hallmark of Venetian painting. Vasari’s aesthetic view finds an echo in the emphasis on *colorito*, which recurs in Venetian art theory of the Cinquecento and Seicento, notably the treatises on painting by Paolo Pino, Ludovico Dolce and Marco Boschini.⁷³

In fact, to speak of venetianness with regards to Renaissance works is inaccurate in that the term was not used in early modern Italy, as it does not appear in any treatise of the time. The word venetianness (“venezianità”) was first applied by Mauro Boni to himself in a letter written in Venice on 12 March 1804 and addressed to the abbot Luigi Lanzi, to whom he revealed his wish to write a new history of Venetian art.⁷⁴ In addition, the word is closely linked with twentieth-century nationalist movements, such as fascism, for

⁷⁰ Carroll (2006), pp. 169-170.

⁷¹ Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (Pearson: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 15.

⁷² Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Gaston Du C. De Vere, 2 vols (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 944-945.

⁷³ Paolo Pino, ‘Dialogo di pittura,’ in *Trattati d’arte del Cinquecento: tra manierismo e controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi, 3 vols (Bari: Laterza, 1960-1962), vol. 1, pp. 95-139, especially 116-118; Ludovico Dolce, ‘Dialogo della pittura,’ in *Trattati d’arte del Cinquecento: tra manierismo e controriforma* (1960-1962), vol. 1, pp. 143-206, especially 184, 200; Boschini (1966), p. 748. See also David Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 17-20.

⁷⁴ BCM, *Carteggio Luigi Lanzi*, MS 770.I.176, cited in Chiara Gauna, *La Storia pittorica di Luigi Lanzi: arti, storia e musei nel Settecento* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 2003), p. 157.

which the sense of Venetian identity became instrumental in justifying its ideology and expansionism.⁷⁵

Carroll has also maintained that Montagna's assimilation of Bellini's style is a sign of "Venetian hegemony," much like the deliberate political submission of the Vicentine government to Venice.⁷⁶ The limits of this argument lie in the sense that one gains of a one-directional artistic relationship between Venice and Vicenza. This line of thought is the by-product of an urban-centred regional geography that has its roots in sixteenth-century politics and art theory. The image of the absolute centrality and power of attraction of Venice in Renaissance Veneto characterised a political ideology which, according to Gino Benzoni, led sixteenth-century Venetian diplomats to deem small centres peripheral. Benzoni has noted that two political, economic and cultural centres, Vienna and Venice, were described by Venetian diplomats as "metropolis" or "important," and "dominating," respectively.⁷⁷

In studies on Lotto's artistic career, as much as Montagna's, a Venice-centred perspective has occasionally emerged. In his description of Lotto's artistic activity in Treviso, Cohen has defined the city as a minor cultural centre under Venetian cultural influence, owing to its geographic proximity to the capital of the *Serenissima*.⁷⁸ Cohen's contention that the artistic production in Treviso was in the Venetian orbit seems to be reminiscent of the picture of

⁷⁵ As argued by Christopher James Nygren in his paper 'Venezianità: The Language, Ideology, and Geography of an Art Historical Commonplace,' delivered in Toronto at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America (17-19 March 2019). See also Mario Isnenghi, 'D'Annunzio e l'ideologia della venezianità,' in *D'Annunzio e Venezia* (Rome: Lucarini, 1991), pp. 229-244.

⁷⁶ Carroll (2006), pp. 169-170.

⁷⁷ Gino Benzoni, 'Dal centro alla periferia: qualche spunto ai fini di un fondale per Jacopo Bassano,' *Atti dell'istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti. Classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti* 153:2 (1995), pp. 1-2.

⁷⁸ Cohen (1996), pp. 4-5.

Venice as a controlling dominant cultural centre originating from early modern thinking.

David Young Kim has expressed a similar view in his description of Lotto's *St Jerome in the Wilderness* painted in 1506 in Treviso and now in the Louvre [Fig. 34]. In describing the panel, Young Kim has stressed that, according to the sixteenth-century architect Michele Sanmicheli, Treviso was an extension of Venice.⁷⁹ In particular, Sanmicheli described Padua and Treviso as “boroughs” of Venice and as “the main limbs” of Venice’s “body.”⁸⁰ Young Kim has broadened the semantic range of the term “Venetian,” which he believes to refer also to commodities imported to Venice, for instance Dürer’s engravings available in the city which inspired the landscape painted by Lotto in his *St Jerome*.⁸¹ A Venice-oriented approach, corroborated by Sanmicheli’s emphasis on the magnetic pull of Venice, thus seems to have been taken by Young Kim in his assessment of the artistic role of Renaissance Treviso, where Lotto’s *St Jerome* was painted.

The aforementioned studies are indicative of art historians’ tendency to identify the artistic production of Italian regions with major centres, such as Venice, Florence and Rome, in line with a city-based regional geography. The latter, as pointed out by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, was theorised in the field of economic analysis in the 1930s and argued that a region was an area controlled by a metropolitan centre, with which it came to be associated. In

⁷⁹ Young Kim (2014), p. 13.

⁸⁰ On Sanmicheli’s view of Padua and Treviso, see Antonio Bertoldi, *Michele Sanmicheli al servizio della Repubblica Veneta: documenti tratti dal R. Archivio Generale di Venezia* (Verona: G. Franchini, 1874), pp. 43-47. See also Lionello Puppi, *Michele Sanmicheli, architetto di Verona* (Padua: Marsilio, 1971), p. 81: “[...] Padoa et Treviso se dieno riputare come borghi di questa città, la quale insieme con quelle è un corpo solo, e cusì die esser tenuta...; et sicome un corpo non può stare senza li soi membra principali, così questa città pateria grandemente quando uno de tali membri li mancasse [...]”

⁸¹ Young Kim (2014), p. 13. As regards the influence of Dürer’s engraving of *St Jerome* (1496) on Lotto’s painting of *St Jerome in the Wilderness* now in the Louvre, see Peter Humfrey, *Lorenzo Lotto* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 12, 16-17.

discussing the widespread propensity to look upon High Renaissance art as a product of Florence, Rome and Venice, Kaufmann has dismissed the identification of the art of a particular region, or province, with the art of a particular centre as “fairly restricted.”⁸² Following the same line, in a recent essay on Byzantine art, Antony Eastmond has shown the shortcomings of the tight association of Byzantine art with “the art of Costantinople.”⁸³ A Costantinople-centred view has indeed led major scholars to neglect the importance of thirty Byzantine ivories dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries and probably made in Italy, which is held to have been the periphery of Costantinople at the time.⁸⁴

Kaufmann’s and Eastmond’s observations show that a city-centred regional geography needs to embrace a wider spectrum of urban centres. This line of interpretation should prompt scholars to regard Renaissance Veneto as a polycentric region, at the expense of Venice as the unique centre of gravity.

In conclusion, my analysis of the treatises written by Paolo Pino, Giorgio Vasari, Ludovico Dolce, Carlo Ridolfi and Marco Boschini has been instrumental in illustrating the origins of the emphasis on Venetian painting and on Titian as Venice’s flagship painter in the historiography of Venetian art. My investigation of literary sources has also enabled me to trace the origins and unveil the limits of scholars’ frequent use of Venice and its *maniera moderna* as

⁸² Kaufmann (2004), pp. 46, 155-156, 161.

⁸³ Antony Eastmond, ‘The Limits of Byzantine Art,’ in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 318, 320, 322. Eastmond also argues that “the exclusion of these probably Italian ivories runs counter to the inclusion of the Italian monumental mosaics we have already encountered, even though both were made in similar cultural ambit. Just as the mosaics were included because of their exceptional quality, so the ivories are excluded because of their perceived inadequacies... Byzantium emerges as the center for good art, with poorer products consigned to the periphery. Low-quality art has here been physically removed from the heartlands of the empire.” (p. 320).

⁸⁴ See, in particular, John Beckwith, *The Art of Constantinople. An Introduction to Byzantine Art 330-1453* (London: Phaidon Press, 1961); Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (Boston: Boston Book and Art Shop, 1964).

the principal yardsticks with which to judge the quality of *terraferma* art. Scholars' emphasis on the excellence of the artistic production in late Quattrocento and Cinquecento Venice is the consequence of a long-standing image of the city as the dominant cultural centre in the Veneto, which has in some cases led to mistaken assessment of *terraferma* artists.

1.3 The Artistic Centrality of Renaissance Vicenza in the *Terraferma*

The question of whether Vicenza was “centre” or “periphery” in Montagna’s day calls for analysis of the centre-periphery debate in art history. This debate has long been shaped by an imperialist and colonialist view of art that has brought about criticism levelled against the art of outlying regions. The colonialist interpretation of peripheral art is exemplified by Bernard Berenson’s appraisal of the illuminations of the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, an illustrated devotional treatise written in the fourteenth century. According to Berenson, the author of these illuminations might have been a Florentine artist who had possibly travelled to Spain, France and even Greece, as suggested by some non-Italian elements of his style.⁸⁵ The scholar’s most debatable statement runs as follows: “I cannot shake off my convictions that fashions in top hat and cravats do, as a rule, go from Bond Street and the Rue de la Paix to the Congolese heart of darkness and not the other way round.”⁸⁶ Another example of the imperialist mindset that is worth mentioning is William John Archer’s study on the Indian modernist painter Gaganendranath Tagore (1867-1938). Archer’s conviction that Tagore was a clumsy imitator of Picasso is symptomatic of the diffuse belief in a one-directional relationship between Western and non-Western modernism.⁸⁷ A few years after the publication of Archer’s book, Kenneth Clark published a fundamental study in which he measured the degrees of provincialism in art on the basis of the geographical distance from a metropolitan centre.⁸⁸ This standpoint is reminiscent of Albert

⁸⁵ Bernard Berenson, ‘Due illustratori italiani dello Speculum Humanae Salvationis,’ *Bollettino d’Arte* 19 (1925), pp. 289-320, especially p. 294.

⁸⁶ Id., *Studies in Medieval Painting* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1930), pp. 101 ff. For further reference, see Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

⁸⁷ William John Archer, *India and Modern Art* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959), p. 43.

⁸⁸ Kenneth Clark, *Provincialism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 3-4.

Dauzat's belief that "each social centre is a foyer of geographical irradiation"⁸⁹ and of Jean-Auguste Brutails' idea that "style spreads like concentric waves around a point of emission, although not so calmly."⁹⁰ A turning point in the centre-periphery debate has been marked by Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg's economically driven centre-periphery model, according to which artistic innovation, competition and exportation of works of art are the main criteria defining a centre.⁹¹ Yet Nicolas Bock has claimed that these criteria cannot account for the centrality of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Naples, in which the development of local art largely rested on the consistent importation of foreign artists and works of art promoted by the court. In this respect, Bock has contended that "the intentional importation of foreign artists and works of art is therefore not necessarily a sign of cultural weakness but rather, and preeminently, a cultural enrichment. Such enrichment constitutes an essential and foundational constituent of the freedom of choice which is one of the criteria defining a center."⁹² Bock's definition of cultural enrichment as an integral part of a criterion defining a centre is instrumental in expanding the semantic range of centrality. Arguably, Vicenza was already importing foreign artists in the fourteenth century. The façade portal of the church of San Lorenzo was sculpted between 1342 and 1345 by the Venetian stonecutter Andriolo de Santi, while inside the church the polyptych of the *Dormitio Virginis* by Paolo Veneziano, painted in Venice in 1333, stood on the high altar

⁸⁹ Albert Dauzat, *La géographie linguistique: avec 7 figures dans le texte* (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1922), p. 171: "[...] d'une façon générale, chaque centre social est un foyer d'irradiation."

⁹⁰ Jean-Auguste Brutails, *La géographie monumentale de la France aux époques romane et gothique* (Paris: Champion, 1923), p. 40: "Autour des centres, le style se répand, comme autour d'un point d'émission se répandent les ondes concentriques."

⁹¹ Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg, 'Centro e periferia,' in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, ed. Giovanni Previtali, 12 vols (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1979), vol. 1:1, pp. 285-352. See also Castelnuovo's introduction to Bialostocki (1989), p. 45.

⁹² Bock (2008), p. 33; Id. (2010), pp. 165, 170.

[Figs 35-36].⁹³ These commissions are indicative of Vicenza's ability to attract artists from the Dominant and reveal how the city did not remain inertly in the fringes of the Venetian empire, but exploited its condition as centre of the Venetian dominion with an active role in the art market. Vicenza continued to foster its centrality in the early Quattrocento, when some of the most prestigious artistic commissions were entrusted to foreign artists, such as Michelino da Besozzo, who decorated Giovanni Thiene's family chapel in the church of Santa Corona around 1415 [Fig. 37].⁹⁴ In addition, local artists absorbed and experimented with the decorative Gothic style typical of the courts of Mantua, Verona and Padua, the pictorial manner of the Bolognese school, and the archaeological props characterising paintings made in Francesco Squarcione's Paduan workshop.⁹⁵ Another sign of "cultural enrichment" was the presence in Vicenza of artists from various parts of northern Italy between the 1460s and 1480s, such as the sculptors Tommaso da Milano, Bernardino da Como, Giacomo da Porlezza from Lugano and Angelo da Verona, and the architects Lorenzo da Bologna and Domenico da Venezia.⁹⁶ Among the foreign painters who were summoned to Vicenza in the late fifteenth century, Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano deserve a particular mention here. The former painted a *Transfiguration of Christ* around

⁹³ Rodolfo Gallo, 'Contributi alla storia della scultura veneziana. I—Andriolo de Santi,' *Archivio veneto* 44-45 (1949), pp. 1-40, especially 40; Robert Gibbs, *Tomaso da Modena: Painting in Emilia and the March of Treviso, 1340-80* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 62-63, 267-268; Louise Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 71-88.

⁹⁴ Keith Christiansen, 'La pittura a Venezia e in Veneto nel primo Quattrocento,' in *La pittura in Italia. Il Quattrocento*, ed. Federico Zeri, 2 vols (Milan: Electa, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 120 ff.

⁹⁵ Neher (2007), pp. 254-256. See also Lionello Puppi, 'Squarcioneschi a Vicenza,' *Emporium* 70:7 (1964), pp. 6-7.

⁹⁶ Barbieri (1982), pp. 9-14. On the restoration and embellishment of Vicenza during the fifteenth century, see Neher (2007), pp. 258 ff.

1478-79 for the Trissino Chapel in the city cathedral,⁹⁷ as well as a *Baptism of Christ* around 1500 for the Graziani altar in Santa Corona [Figs 38-39].⁹⁸ The latter painted *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts James the Apostle and Jerome* in 1489 for the Sangiovanni Chapel in San Bartolomeo [Fig. 40].⁹⁹ These works testify to the updated tastes of local commissioners, as well as to their wish to foster their honour in the city by tasking first-rate artists with painting altarpieces for prestigious religious sites of the city.

It may be argued that between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Padua experienced the same “cultural enrichment” as Vicenza by importing from Florence two key artists, Giotto and Donatello. The former’s frescoes painted between 1303 and 1305 in Padua for the family chapel of the Paduan wealthy moneylender Enrico Scrovegni are one of the most impressive fresco cycles of European art, which undoubtedly enriched the local *milieu*. The influence of Byzantine models, notably the mosaics of San Marco in Venice, on Giotto’s frescoes has been deemed indicative of the commissioner’s desire to foster his high social status and spread his reputation beyond Padua, especially in Venice. Scrovegni’s ambitions derived from his close ties to the Dominant, where he had been citizen since 1301, owned houses, received a knighthood and became honorary member of the Great Council.¹⁰⁰ In depicting the stories of the Virgin’s parents, Joachim and Anna, according to

⁹⁷ On the patronage of this altarpiece, see Magrini (1863), p. 43; and De Zuani (2015), pp. 39-40.

⁹⁸ Simona Ciofetta, ‘Il “Battesimo di Cristo” di Giovanni Bellini in Santa Corona a Vicenza. Patronato e devozione privata,’ *Venezia Cinquecento: studi di storia dell’arte e della cultura* 2 (1992), pp. 61-88. For a very brief reference to Giovanni Bellini supplying altarpieces to Vicenza, see also Stephen J. Campbell, ‘Artistic Geographies,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Michael Wyatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 31.

⁹⁹ Peter Humfrey, ‘Cima da Conegliano at San Bartolomeo in Vicenza,’ *Arte veneta* 31 (1977), pp. 176-181.

¹⁰⁰ Jane C. Long, ‘The Life of the Virgin at the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua and San Marco, Venice,’ in *Padua and Venice: Transcultural Exchange in the Early Modern Age*, eds Brigit Blass-Simmen and Stefan Weppelmann (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 20, 24.

the narratives of the lost mosaic cycle in San Marco, Giotto changed the setting and attitude of the figures to a more contemporary fashion so as to make the sacred scenes more accessible to viewers [Fig. 41]. This has rightly been interpreted as an artistic choice aimed at modernising the Eastern visual language of Venetian mosaics and resulting from Scrovegni's will to address a Venetian as well as Paduan audience.¹⁰¹

More than a century later, Donatello sojourned in Padua between 1444 and 1453. By this time Florence had already become a flourishing artistic centre dominated by four major artists, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Filippo Brunelleschi, Masaccio and Donatello. The latter had already showcased his ability as a sculptor by making outstanding works, including the statues for the church of Orsanmichele in the 1410s and 1420s, the *Cantoria* for the Duomo of Santa Maria del Fiore between 1433 and 1439, and the *Cavalcanti Annunciation* for the Basilica of Santa Croce around 1435. The extent to which Donatello's works for Padua, the *Crucifixion* and altarpiece for the Basilica del Santo and the *Equestrian Statue of the Gattamelata* for the Piazza del Santo, marked a turning point in the city's art scene has widely been discussed. In particular, Donatello has been credited with introducing local artists, most of whom were still adhering to the stylistic conventions of late Gothic art, to new elements such as perspective, the ornamental qualities of painted materials and the antique, a three-dimensional depiction of the figures obtained through light and shade contrasts, and the emphasis on human feelings by means of a stark naturalism [Fig. 42].¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 24, 26.

¹⁰² Alberta De Nicolò Salmazo, 'Padova,' in *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Quattrocento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols (Milan: Electa, 1990), vol. 2, p. 491.

Donatello's work for the Gattamelata family is believed to have been one of the possible major reasons for his trip to Padua.¹⁰³ Aside from hiring Donatello, the family, particularly the *condottiere* Erasmo of Narni, also called the Gattamelata, and his wife Giacomina della Leonessa, bolstered the city's artistic centrality by entrusting the decoration of their family chapel in the Basilica del Santo to both local and foreign artists. The Paduan Gregorio di Allegretto carved the gisant effigy of Erasmo of Narni and designed that of his son Gianantonio between 1457 and 1459 [Fig. 43], while the chapel altarpiece was painted probably between 1459 and 1460 by the Venetian Jacopo Bellini and his sons Gentile and Giovanni.¹⁰⁴ The tryptich is now dismembered, and the panel showing Sts Anthony the Abbot and Bernardino of Siena standing, now in the National Gallery of Washington, is thought to be its left wing [Fig. 44].¹⁰⁵

The Bellini were not the only artists from Venice who contributed to enriching Paduan art around the middle of the fifteenth century. Antonio Vivarini, the leader of one of the main Venetian workshops, in the late 1440s painted two polyptychs for the church of San Francesco in Padua and for the Benedictine convent in Praglia, near Padua [Fig. 45]. In the same years he also frescoed the Ovetari Chapel in the Paduan church of the Eremitani, along with Giovanni d'Alemagna and two local painters, Andrea Mantegna and Nicolò Pizolo. The frescoes were commissioned in 1448 by the noble Antonio

¹⁰³ Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, 9 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1878-1885), vol. 2, p. 410; Horst Woldemar Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 150-151.

¹⁰⁴ Sarah Blake McHam, 'The Eclectic Taste of the Gattamelata Family,' in *Padua and Venice: Transcultural Exchange in the Early Modern Age* (2017), pp. 29-30, 36-37.

¹⁰⁵ Colin Eisler, 'Saints Anthony Abbot and Bernardino of Siena' Designed by Jacopo and Painted by Gentile Bellini,' *Arte Veneta* 39 (1985), pp. 32-40; Miklós Boskovits, 'Jacopo Bellini,' in *Italian Paintings of the Fifteenth Century. The Collections of the National Gallery of Art, Systematic Catalog*, eds Miklós Boskovits, David Alan Brown et al. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 89.

Ovetari, whose decision to hire Venetian and Paduan artists has been deemed an example of local commissioners' interest both in the well-established Venetian late Gothic manner and the new pictorial idiom being developed by young local artists [Figs 46-47].¹⁰⁶ In light of this, as argued before with respect to Vicentine commissioners, Paduan commissioners were also keen on attracting illustrious foreign artists, thus contributing to fostering the artistic centrality of the city.

The impact on the Venetian art scene of the Sicilian Antonello da Messina, whose first sojourn in Venice Puppi dated after the middle of November 1474 and before August 1475,¹⁰⁷ testifies to the city's development of its artistic centrality also through the import of gifted artists from provincial areas. Antonello's altarpiece for the Venetian church of San Cassiano, painted between 1475 and 1476, was commissioned by the Venetian patrician Pietro Bon and had an immediate influence on the local artistic *milieu*, particularly on the leading painter Giovanni Bellini [Fig. 9]. Several early works by Bellini, probably painted between 1475 and 1480, reveal his interest in Antonello's volumetric modelling of the figures, as noticeable in the heads of the angels surrounding the dead Christ in the *Pietà* now in Rimini [Fig. 48].¹⁰⁸ Two more religious paintings by Bellini, the *Risen Christ* now in Berlin and the *Crucifixion* in the Corsini Collection in Florence, have been described as Antonellesque on account of the painter's exploitation of the oil technique and ability to merge

¹⁰⁶ De Nicolò Salmazo (1990), p. 492.

¹⁰⁷ Lionello Puppi, 'Il viaggio e il soggiorno a Venezia di Antonello da Messina,' *Museum Patavinum* 1:2 (1983), p. 254.

¹⁰⁸ Rodolfo Pallucchini in *Giovanni Bellini* (exhibition catalogue, Palazzo Ducale, Venice, 12 June 1949 - 5 October 1949), ed. Rodolfo Pallucchini (Venice: Alfieri, 1949), p. 125; Giles Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 64; Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa in *Giovanni Bellini* (exhibition catalogue, Scuderie del Quirinale, Rome, 30 September 2008 - 11 January 2009), eds Mauro Lucco and Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa (Cinisello Balsamo, Milano: Silvana, 2008), pp. 178-180.

colour and light to imbue the composition with emotional qualities.¹⁰⁹ Antonello's portraits may also have inspired Bellini, as seen in his *Portrait of a Young Senator*, probably painted between 1480 and 1485 and now in the Musei Civici in Padua [Fig. 49]. In this portrait the use of a fictive parapet to enhance the impression of depth and lead the viewer's eyes into the composition seems to derive from Antonello's portraits, such as the *Trivulzio Portrait* in Turin [Fig. 50], as well as from Flemish portraits, especially those by Hans Memling.¹¹⁰ Antonello's portraits were certainly circulating in Venice and contributed to spreading his artistic fame, as confirmed by Marcantonio Michiel, who mentioned the presence of two portraits on small panels by Antonello in the Venetian collection of Messer Antonio Pasqualino.¹¹¹ Antonello's work in Venice was certainly a form of cultural enrichment for the city, mainly for the commissioner Pietro Bon and local artists like Bellini who looked to the Sicilian's sophisticated portraits and handling of the Northern oil technique.¹¹²

Another fundamental statement by Nicolas Bock is that "the export of Florentine art and artists to Naples and other aristocratic courts was not a one-sided affair." Artists who adhered to the international Gothic style moved from the aristocratic courts of Italy and Avignon to Florence when the latter became the pope's residence at the outset of the Quattrocento.¹¹³ Similarly, the export of Venetian models such as Bellini's paintings to Vicenza in the late Quattrocento was not "a one-sided affair." The commission of Montagna's

¹⁰⁹ Mauro Lucco and Villa in *Giovanni Bellini* (2008), pp. 208-215, especially 210, 212.

¹¹⁰ Peter Humfrey in *Giovanni Bellini* (2008), p. 240.

¹¹¹ Marcantonio Michiel, *The Anonimo: Notes on Pictures and Works of Art in Italy Made by an Anonymous Writer in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Paolo Mussi and ed. George C. Williamson (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1903), p. 95; Fiorella Sricchia Santoro, 'Antonello a Venezia,' in *Antonello da Messina* (exhibition catalogue, Museo Regionale, Messina, 22 October 1981 - 31 January 1982), eds Alessandro Marabottini and Fiorella Sricchia Santoro (Rome: De Luca, 1981), p. 164.

¹¹² Rona Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 121.

¹¹³ Bock (2010), p. 170.

teleri for the Scuola Grande di San Marco in Venice provides a better understanding of the two-directional artistic relationship between Venice and Vicenza.¹¹⁴ Elizabeth Carroll has argued that these *teleri*, made in 1482 and destroyed by a fire in 1485, were initially meant to be executed a decade earlier by Giovanni Bellini and eventually assigned to Montagna, because Bellini was particularly busy with other commissions. Bellini was indeed entrusted with the task of painting the *Pesaro Altarpiece* for the high altar of the church of San Francesco in Pesaro (c. 1471-1474), the *St Catherine of Siena Altarpiece* (1474-1475), and the *St Job Altarpiece* for the Venetian church of San Giobbe (around 1480) [Figs 8, 51-52].¹¹⁵ It is significant that the Scuola decided to replace Bellini, the then-undisputed leader of the Venetian school of painting, with an artist from the *terraferma* who became involved in a highly prestigious public commission. Montagna was tasked with decorating the walls of the chapter hall in the Scuola in collaboration with some of the leading artists in Venice, such as Lazzaro Bastiani, Andrea da Murano, Bartolomeo Vivarini, Jacopo and Gentile Bellini.¹¹⁶ This commission attests to the two-sided relationship between Venice and Vicenza, in which an artist from the Venetian mainland appropriates the qualities and competences of the Dominant, to such an extent that he becomes competitive within its market, although his focus remains the *terraferma*. Another example of the mutual artistic exchange between Vicenza

¹¹⁴ ASVe, *Scuola Grande di San Marco, Atti*, b. 16 bis (1428-1523), fol. 6v, cited in Pietro Paoletti, *Raccolta di documenti inediti per servire alla storia della pittura veneziana nei secoli XV e XVI* (Padua: R. Stabilimento P. Prosperini, 1894), pp. 11-12; Tancred Borenius, *I pittori di Vicenza 1480-1550* (Vicenza: Rumor, 1912, first published 1909), p. 215 doct 1; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 119. The commission was carried out in 1482, although the contract was drawn up on 23 February 1483 at the Scuola Grande di San Marco. Another *terraferma* painter who worked for the Scuola di San Marco was the Paduan Francesco Squarcione. In 1466, an inventory cites two canvasses of the Passion made by the artist for the Scuola. On this, see Brigit Blass-Simmen, 'Cultural Transfer in Microcosm,' in *Padua and Venice: Transcultural Exchange in the Early Modern Age* (2017), p. 15.

¹¹⁵ Carroll (2006), p. 36.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

and Venice are two altarpieces painted for Venice by the Vicentine Giovanni Buonconsiglio. The first work, made in 1495, was commissioned by the noble Gabriele Morosini for the main altar of the Venetian church of Santi Cosma e Damiano at the Giudecca.¹¹⁷ The most interesting aspect of this work is the predominant influence of the manner of the non-Venetian Antonello da Messina, whose altarpiece for the Venetian church of San Cassiano, painted between 1475 and 1476, must have impressed Buonconsiglio. The latter seems to have modelled his figures on those by Antonello, as noticeable in the close resemblance of the facial expression and physiognomy of St Benedict to those of Antonello's St Nicholas, and of the roundness, inclination and sweet countenance of St Damian's face to those of Antonello's Virgin [Fig. 53]. Buonconsiglio's Virgin and Child are also very similar to those depicted by Antonello, especially the position of the Christ Child's legs, the inclination of the figures' heads, the foreshortening of the Virgin's right hand and the brocaded pattern on her robe [Fig. 54].¹¹⁸

The analysis of the characteristics of local commissioners is useful for stressing the artistic centrality of Vicenza in Renaissance Veneto, as they were the main promoters of the importation of foreign artists and works of art. The key role of commissioners is central to Stephen J. Campbell's rejection of the "peripheral" position of sites located in the surroundings of large centres. In particular, he has maintained that "according to the criteria of Castelnovo and Ginzburg, the Sacro Monte of Varallo is a site on the "periphery" of a major cultural, economic, and political metropolis, the city of Milan." Despite this, the scholar has argued that, alongside its religious importance as a pilgrimage

¹¹⁷ Enrico Maria Dal Pozzolo, *Giovanni Buonconsiglio detto Marescalco: l'opera completa* (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana, 1998), p. 51.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 52.

destination, “the artistic involvement of Gaudenzio Ferrari, and later of Tanzio da Varallo, together with the patronage of powerful figures such as the archbishop Carlo Borromeo, places the relegation of the Sacro Monte to the “periphery” under serious strain.”¹¹⁹

The same goes for Vicenza, where between 1500 and 1502 Giovanni Bellini painted a *Baptism of Christ* for the Graziani Chapel in Santa Corona [Fig. 39]. Not only the high reputation of Bellini, but also the standing of the local commissioner Battista Graziani, a noble textile merchant who was honoured with the title of palatine count,¹²⁰ undermine the image of Vicenza as a cultural backwater. The centrality of Vicenza is conditional upon the import of a first-class painter like Bellini promoted by Graziani. This aspect has not been emphasised by scholarship, as the erection of the altar and the iconography of Bellini’s altarpiece have mainly been seen as the result of Graziani’s devotion to his name saint, John the Baptist, to whom the altar was dedicated.¹²¹ However, spirituality is only one major reason for the commissioning of the painting, as the prestige that accrued to Graziani by tasking Bellini, the most celebrated painter in Venice at the time, with painting the most important Renaissance altarpiece in Vicenza,¹²² cannot be denied. Indeed, in a letter of 1506, Albrecht Dürer related that Bellini, despite his old age, was still “the best painter of all.”¹²³ In the same vein, on 23 February 1507, in his account of the burial of Gentile Bellini, Giovanni’s brother, the Venetian patrician Marin Sanudo wrote: “There remains his brother Giovanni Bellini, who is the most excellent

¹¹⁹ Campbell (2014), p. 39.

¹²⁰ Joanne Allen, ‘Giovanni Bellini’s *Baptism of Christ* in Its Visual and Devotional Context: Transforming Sacred Space in Santa Corona in Vicenza,’ *Renaissance Studies* 27:5 (2013), p. 693.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 694, 696.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 696.

¹²³ Hans Rupprich, *Dürer Schriftlicher Nachlass*, 3 vols (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1956-1969), vol. 1, p. 44: “Er jst ser alt vnd jst noch der pest jm gemoll.”

painter in Italy.”¹²⁴ A similar point can be made with regards to Parma, where in 1506 Cima da Conegliano was commissioned to paint an altarpiece by the Parmesan canon Bartolomeo Montini for his chapel in the city cathedral [Fig. 55]. It has been argued that Montini’s decision to summon a prominent artist from Venice could be indicative of his ambition to distinguish himself.¹²⁵ Not only honour and ambition, but also the influence of Montini on the iconography of the altarpiece accounts for the artistic centrality of Parma. The visual continuum between the pictorial and sculptural decoration of the Montini Chapel and some architectural details of Cima’s altarpiece¹²⁶ signals the painter’s attempt to comply with the decorative plan envisaged by the commissioner for his own chapel.

Cima’s concern for the setting in which his works were to be installed is noticeable also in his altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts James the Apostle and Jerome* for San Bartolomeo in Vicenza, made in 1489 for the Sangiovanni brothers [Fig. 40]. According to Peter Humfrey, Cima must have been very familiar with Montagna’s altarpiece of *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child with Sts Monica and Mary Magdalen*, painted around 1485 for the Porto Pagello Chapel in the same church, especially with the visual link between the concavity of the chapel and the niche-like space of the altarpiece’s background [Fig. 1].¹²⁷ The *Montini* and *Sangiovanni Altarpieces* attest that Parma and Vicenza were centres in which local artists and commissioners inspired and influenced Cima, who was already based in Venice when he received these commissions.

¹²⁴ Marin Sanudo, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin, 58 vols (Venice: Visentini, 1879-1903), vol. 6, col. 552: “Ozi fo sepolto a San Zane Polo Zentil Belin, ottimo pytor, [...] È restato il fratello, Zuan Belin, ch’è più eccellente pitor de Italia.”

¹²⁵ Alessandra Talignani, ‘La cappella Montini nella cattedrale di Parma: un *unicum* di forme, colori ed epigrafi nella “periferia,” in *Emilia e Marche nel Rinascimento: l’identità visiva della “periferia,”* ed. Giancarla Periti (Azzano San Paolo, Bergamo: Bolis, 2005), pp. 125-126.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹²⁷ Humfrey (1977), pp. 177-178.

In particular, the proposed influence of Montagna's altarpiece on Cima's painting for San Bartolomeo is indicative of a mutual as opposed to one-directional relationship between Vicenza and Venice, as in this case the latter's art did not shape the former's.

Not only Cima, but also two Venetians, Giovanni Bellini and Carlo Crivelli, found inspiration in the *terraferma*. According to Otto Pächt, the iconography of Bellini's *Virgin Enthroned Adoring the Sleeping Child*, painted in 1475 and now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia of Venice [Fig. 56], might have been inspired by a carved statuette of the *Pietà* seen by the painter in the Venetian mainland. Statuettes of the *Pietà* were at the time still common in the *terraferma* as a result of the popularity of this genre, which originated and spread from the north of the Alps [Fig. 57]. The pose of the sleeping Christ Child in Bellini's painting, particularly his right arm dangling from his mother's lap, across which he is lying, brings to mind the dead corpse of Christ depicted in northern paintings of the *Pietà*. In addition, the association of the sleep of Bellini's Christ Child with the death that he will have to suffer for the salvation of humanity suggests that the Venetian artist took inspiration from northern depictions of the *Vesperbild*.¹²⁸ It is also likely that Bellini modelled the *Pietà* in his *St Vincent Ferrer Altarpiece*, painted around 1464 for the Basilica of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, on a marble relief carved for the Paduan church of San Gaetano and ascribed to Donatello and his workshop [Figs 58-59]. The resemblance of the tilt of the head and chest of the dead Christ in Bellini's panel to that of Jesus' head and chest in Donatello's work is uncanny.¹²⁹ Like Bellini, Carlo Crivelli (c. 1430-1495), a native of Venice who was probably

¹²⁸ Otto Pächt, *Venetian Painting in the 15th Century: Jacopo, Gentile and Giovanni Bellini and Andrea Mantegna* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2003), p. 164.

¹²⁹ Matteo Ceriana, 'Bellini e le arti plastiche,' in *Giovanni Bellini* (2008), p. 95.

apprenticed to the Venetian workshop of Antonio Vivarini and partly trained in the Paduan workshop of Francesco Squarcione, might have been inspired by works made in the Venetian mainland.¹³⁰ It has indeed been argued that Crivelli based the Passion scenes in the predella of his polyptych made in 1468 for the church of Santi Lorenzo e Silvestro in Massa Fermana, in the Marche, on the predella scenes of Mantegna's *San Zeno Altarpiece* in Verona [Figs 60-61].¹³¹ Crivelli might have seen Mantegna's work during a possible sojourn in Padua between 1457 and 1460, when Mantegna dispatched his painting to Verona.¹³² Yet not only did Crivelli turn for inspiration to paintings made in provincial centres of the Veneto, but also to works painted in the Marche, where he moved in 1466 and spent the rest of his life. According to Stephen J. Campbell, Crivelli's *Coronation of the Virgin*, painted in 1493 for the church of San Francesco in Fabriano, is modelled on Gentile da Fabriano's *Valle Romita Polyptych*, made around 1414 for the hermitage of Santa Maria in Valdisasso near Fabriano [Figs 62-63]. Campbell has also underscored the similarities between Crivelli's *Consignment of the Keys to St Peter*, made in 1492 for the church of San Pietro di Muralto in Camerino and now in the Gemäldegalerie of Dresden, and the altarpiece painted in the early fifteenth century by Giacomo di Nicola da Recanati for the same church and now in the Pinacoteca Comunale in Macerata.¹³³ These examples show that Venetian artists, despite being formed or working in Venice, looked for guidance to the art circulating or made in provincial centres of the Veneto and beyond.

¹³⁰ Stephen J. Campbell, 'On the Importance of Crivelli,' in *Ornament & Illusion: Carlo Crivelli of Venice*, ed. Stephen J. Campbell (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2015), p. 18.

¹³¹ Ronald William Lightbown, *Carlo Crivelli* (New Haven: Yale University, 2004), pp. 103-108; Campbell (2015), p. 24.

¹³² Campbell (2015), p. 18.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

The impact of Montagna's paintings on artists active in the Venetian mainland, especially in the Vicentino, is yet another aspect which evidences the artistic centrality of Renaissance Vicenza. Stephen J. Campbell has drawn a list of definitions of "periphery" derived from Castelnuevo and Ginzburg's centre-periphery model, among which one well describes the peripheral Vicentino: "most commonly, it is a generally rural region that imports its artistic expertise from elsewhere, usually from a major center."¹³⁴ Campbell therefore defines the periphery as a "rural region," which the Vicentino was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this "rural region," Vicenza functioned as the dominant artistic centre from which the Vicentino imported "its artistic expertise." For instance, as argued by Franco Barbieri, the installation of Montagna's altarpiece in the parish church of Cartigliano [Fig. 18] must have influenced Francesco da Ponte,¹³⁵ who was based in Bassano, a small town located near the village of Cartigliano. Unfortunately, the complexity of the artistic exchange between Vicenza and its environs, and the influential role of Montagna's *Cartigliano Altarpiece*, have been undermined by Marco Tanzi's and Mauro Lucco's views of the Vicentino as a cultural backwater which exerted a negative influence on Montagna's style. Tanzi maintains that Montagna suffered from a "loss of inspiration" in the *Cartigliano Altarpiece*, which resulted from his "capillary penetration into the Vicentine territory."¹³⁶ In the same vein, Lucco has suggested that "[...] here it is probably the geographical position in a small rural centre to have led to the repetitive assembly of motifs developed many years before [...]."¹³⁷ I believe that Tanzi's and Lucco's views do not do justice to Montagna's *Cartigliano Altarpiece*, whose rich symbolism and devotional power

¹³⁴ Campbell (2014), p. 22.

¹³⁵ Barbieri (1982), p. 23.

¹³⁶ Marco Tanzi, 'Vicenza,' in *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Quattrocento* (1990), vol. 2, p. 619.

¹³⁷ Lucco (2014), p. 81.

in stimulating the faith of local devotees have recently been singled out.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the painting needs to be praised for its gleaming colours, the meticulous depiction of the fictitious marble of the pedestal and Virgin's throne, and, above all, the monumentality of the saints, all of which are hallmarks of Montagna's style.

The *Cartigliano Altarpiece* is not the only painting by Montagna that may have functioned as an inescapable paradigm for artists working in the Vicentino. In sculpting his *Virgin and Child* for the Santuario di Santa Maria della Neve in Carrè, near Vicenza, Girolamo Vicentino was probably inspired by the Madonnas painted in Montagna's *Virgin and Child with Sts Onuphrius and John the Baptist*, painted around 1485 for the church of San Michele in Vicenza, and his *Certosa di Pavia Altarpiece* [Figs 12, 14, 64]. Moreover, when carving his *Madonna and Child* for the Santuario di Santa Maria del Cengio in Isola Vicentina, near Vicenza, Vicentino arguably had in mind the Virgin depicted by Montagna in *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child with Sts Monica and Mary Magdalen* [Figs 1, 65]. This sculpture resembles its Montaguesque prototype in the sweet countenance of the Virgin, her slightly twisted body, and the position of the Christ Child.¹³⁹ These comparisons evidence that Montagna's paintings stand as valid examples of art from the centre, Vicenza, which influenced the artistic production of the surrounding periphery. It has also been argued that Montagna might have looked to the artistic production of the Vicentino. For instance, Laura De Zuani has called attention to the analogies between a drawing of a *Virgin and Child Enthroned*, now in the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest and attributed to Montagna, and a sculpture of the same subject

¹³⁸ Mario Bozzetto, *Bartolomeo Montagna: Madonna in trono con il bambino tra i santi, parrocchiale di Cartigliano, 1497-98* (Cartigliano, Vicenza: Bozzetto, 2010), pp. 4, 16.

¹³⁹ De Zuani (2015), pp. 96-97.

carved by Tommaso da Lugano for the parish church of Piovene Rocchette, near Vicenza [Figs 66-67]. In this case, De Zuani believes that Montagna took over certain characteristics from Tommaso da Lugano's statue, including the handling of the drapery, the decoration of the Virgin's throne and the tender gesture of the Madonna gently holding the Christ Child with her right hand.¹⁴⁰ The association of stylistic aspects of *terraferma* sculptures with paintings is also possible by comparing Giovanni Bellini's *St Justina Borromeo*, now in the Museo Bagatti Valsecchi in Milan, to a terracotta statue of the *Virgin Annunciate* ascribed to the workshop of the Lombard Giovanni de' Fondulis and formerly in the Paduan church of the Eremitani [Figs 68-69]. These works, both executed in the 1470s, present striking similarities in the treatment of the folds of the drapery, which might point to the painter's reliance on the sculpture or similar works.¹⁴¹

The influence of Montagna's works on *terraferma* artists went well beyond the boundaries of the Vicentino. It has long been pointed out that Montagna's *Trento Altarpiece* inspired Girolamo da Treviso il Vecchio's *Madonna Del Fiore Altarpiece*, painted for the duomo of Treviso in 1487 [Fig. 70].¹⁴² Montagna's works are also held to have inspired artists active in Verona and the Veronese. For instance, Montagna's *Crucifixion* frescoed between 1490 and 1495 in the refectory of the Benedictine abbey of Praglia, near Padua, is believed to have inspired the *Crucifixion* painted by Francesco Morone for the church of San Bernardino in Verona [Figs 71-72]. Montagna's *Pietà*, painted in 1500 for the church of Santa Maria di Monte Berico, was a source of inspiration to Gerolamo dai Libri in his *Deposition of Christ from the Cross with Sts Benedict*,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 95-96.

¹⁴¹ Ceriana (2008), p. 95.

¹⁴² Emma Zocca, 'Girolamo da Treviso il Vecchio,' *Bollettino d'arte* 9 (1932), pp. 392-393; Giorgio Fossaluzza, 'Treviso,' in *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Quattrocento* (1990), vol. 2, p. 547.

Scholastica and Helen, painted around 1500 and now in the church of Santo Stefano in Malcesine, near Verona [Figs 26, 73]. Last but not least, when in 1522 Nicolò Giolfino frescoed the San Francesco Chapel in the church of San Bernardino at Verona, he looked for guidance to Montagna's frescoes with stories from the life of St Blaise, painted between 1504 and 1506 in the San Biagio Chapel in the Veronese church of Santi Nazaro e Celso [Figs 22, 74].¹⁴³ It must be noted that the artistic exchange between Montagna and the Veronese artistic *milieu* was not a one-sided affair. The *grottesche* in Montagna's altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Sebastian and Jerome*, painted in 1507 for the church of San Sebastiano in Verona and now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, are a borrowing from Veronese art. In depicting the *grottesche* of the fictive mosaic vault, Montagna was inspired by the *grottesche* painted in the San Biagio Chapel in Santi Nazaro e Celso by the Veronese Giovanni Maria Falconetto in the early 1500s [Figs 75-76].¹⁴⁴

Last but not least, the artistic centrality of Vicenza in late fifteenth to early sixteenth-century Veneto is a consequence of one aspect of the city which has been overlooked by art historians: the progressive advancement of local commerce from the outset of the Quattrocento. Free export of wool textiles to the main market in Venice, alongside cloth production and marketing in Vicenza, contributed to improving the standard of living of Vicentine society.¹⁴⁵ Wool trade was fostered by the *capitula* of 1404 and 1406, as well as by the grant of Venetian citizenship *de intus* in 1406, which allowed Vicentine merchants to transport goods to Venice without payment of Venetian tolls and

¹⁴³ Sergio Marinelli, 'Il primo Cinquecento a Verona,' in *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Cinquecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols (Milan: Electa, 1996), vol. 1, p. 359.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 362.

¹⁴⁵ Giovanni Mantese, *Memorie storiche della chiesa vicentina*, 5 vols (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1964b), vol. 3:2, p. 623.

customs duties. Vicenza's wool industry climaxed in the years 1430-1470,¹⁴⁶ when the city established its reputation as a pivotal centre for the production and marketing of wool, a business which was to die out in the late sixteenth century.¹⁴⁷ The economic growth of Vicenza was further fostered by the trade of timber, wheat and wine, which were shipped from Vicenza to Venice during the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁸

In conclusion, I have shown that Nicolas Bock's centre-periphery theories are essential for our understanding and reappraisal of the artistic centrality of Vicenza in the peripheral Vicentino between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In particular, the role of Vicenza as a centre of gravity in the Venetian mainland resulted from the intentional importation of foreign artists and works of art, such as Bellini's altarpieces painted for the cathedral and Santa Corona, through which the city achieved cultural enrichment [Figs 38-39]. I have also demonstrated, again in accordance with Bock's ideas, that the centrality of the city derived from the exportation of Vicentine art to Venice, such as the *teleri* painted by its flagship artist Montagna for the Scuola Grande di San Marco. Last but not least, I have highlighted the influence of Vicentine art and commissioners on artists from Venice and the *terraferma*, as well as the mutual cultural exchange between Vicenza and the *terraferma* on the one hand, and between Vicenza and Venice on the other.

¹⁴⁶ James Grubb, *Provincial Families of the Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1996), pp. 111-112, 115.

¹⁴⁷ Walter Panciera, 'L'età moderna (1516-1813),' in *Storia di Vicenza*, ed. Giuseppe Gullino (Sommacampagna, Verona: Cierre, 2014), pp. 140-141.

¹⁴⁸ Mantese (1964b), vol. 3:2, pp. 613-615.

1.4 Montagna's Mobility

This section investigates Montagna's mobility in light of both his artistic commissions and real estate activities. I shall show that, unlike many Renaissance artists from the Venetian Republic, for most of his life Montagna remained closely tied to the *terraferma*, particularly his province, the Vicentino, which became his ideal investment avenue as well as the centre of his artistic career. Moreover, I shall assess the painter's style in light of his direct and indirect exposure to foreign artistic environments.

The reconstruction of Montagna's mobility calls for a distinction between his family place of origin, Orzinuovi in the Bresciano, to which he does not seem to have been particularly tethered, and the Vicentino, in which he spent most of his life. In spite of his Brescian origins, only a few notarial deeds attest that Montagna owned properties in the Bresciano. Montagna first acquired land in the Bresciano on 30 January 1469, when he was assigned a quarter of the paternal house and the rental income from 10 1/2 *campi* in Orzinuovi (App. 4, doct 6).¹⁴⁹ Moreover, three archival documents mention three real estate activities by Montagna in Orzinuovi, but it was only in one case, on 10 May 1476, that he purchased land (App. 4, doct 8).¹⁵⁰ This is one of only two known investments in land made by the artist outside the Vicentino, along with a purchase of land in Cittadella, near Padua, on 5 November 1499 (App. 4, doct 50).¹⁵¹ Montagna's remaining thirteen land investments of which we have archival evidence were all made in the Vicentino, namely in Brendola, Costabissara, Montecchio Maggiore, Ospedaletto, Borgo Berga, Montebello,

¹⁴⁹ ASVi, *Notarile*, Daniele Ferretto, b. 4618, anno 1469, fols 23v-24, 31r-32r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102-103; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 106-108.

¹⁵⁰ ASVi, *Notarile*, Giovanni Antonio Gallo, b. 5042, fol. 55, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 109.

¹⁵¹ ASVi, *Notarile*, Francesco Scolari, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501", fols [6-9v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 136.

Borgo di Porta Nuova, Biron, Borgo San Felice, San Lazzaro, Monteviale, Longare and Secula. As regards the other two documents on the painter's real estate activities in the Bresciano, drafted on 7 October 1488¹⁵² and on 25 February 1519,¹⁵³ the former mentions a sale by Montagna of some plots of land in Orzinuovi, while the latter reveals that Montagna authorised his nephew and procurator Antonio Cincani to sell his properties in the same town (App. 4, docts 24, 66). These documents suggest that Montagna probably had a feeble interest in investing in his place of origin. It may be argued that Montagna decided to part with his lands in Orzinuovi in 1519 due to his advanced age. However, in his first will dated 5 October 1521 he is described as “...sanus corpore, mente, bono intellectu, clara loquella et optima memoria...” (App. 4, doct 70).¹⁵⁴ It is therefore more feasible that the artist decided to sell his properties in Orzinuovi on account of the considerable geographical distance of the Bresciano from the Vicentino (around 150 km), where, as noted earlier, most of his lands were located. This assumption is further bolstered by the fact that only one of the artist's works of art can be connected with the area of Brescia, the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Sebastian and Roch* now in the Accademia Carrara of Bergamo [Fig. 10].

The aforementioned transactions suggest that Montagna might have had little interest in travelling far afield to work or attend to his land in the Bresciano, as he was mainly active in a restricted provincial area, the Vicentino. This is why it is probably more accurate to employ Lucco's definition of

¹⁵² ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 94-95, 105-106; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 125-126.

¹⁵³ ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 111-112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 148-149.

¹⁵⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fol. 126, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 49; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 169-170 doct 41; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 150-152.

Montagna as a “commuting”¹⁵⁵ rather than “travelling” artist, as the former implies covering some distance on a regular basis and returning to one’s place of residence. The fact that the painter spent most of his life in the *terraferma* is at odds with the peripatetic life of most Renaissance artists from the Venetian Republic. For instance, Lorenzo Lotto was born in Venice but, for many years since 1506, had travelled to Bergamo, Rome and the Marches for work, while in 1511 the Venetian Sebastiano del Piombo left Venice for Rome, where he became an established and sought-after painter. Carlo Crivelli, also Venetian-born, travelled to Zara in Dalmatia (present-day Zadar in Croatia), where he is recorded as a citizen by 1463, and in 1466 to Fermo, in the Marches, where he painted a great deal of works for various Marchigian centres until his death in Ascoli Piceno in 1495.¹⁵⁶ Equally, artists who were born in the Venetian mainland like Cima, born in Conegliano Veneto, near Treviso, Pordenone, named after his birthplace in the Friuli, and Titian, who was from Pieve di Cadore, in the province of Belluno, had a mobile life trajectory. Unlike Montagna, whose only, yet hypothetical, trip outside the Venetian Republic might have been to Pavia in 1490 (a point to which I shall return), all these artists went well beyond their native regions to carry out artistic commissions. If Cima worked in Parma and Bologna, Pordenone went as far as Mantua, Cremona, Piacenza, Cortemaggiore and Alviano, in the province of Terni in central Italy, and Titian sojourned in many cities, among which Ferrara, Mantua, Urbino and Rome. As regards Pordenone, Charles Cohen has argued that the painter’s life-long attachment to his place of origin was preserved by his business and artistic activities in the area even after 1520, when he was

¹⁵⁵ Lucco (2014), p. 30.

¹⁵⁶ On Crivelli’s mobility, see Campbell (2015), pp. 15-25.

commissioned major works outside the Friuli.¹⁵⁷ If it is true that Pordenone's peripatetic path did not prevent him from remaining tied to his native region, the artistic commissions he received between 1520 and 1522 in Cremona, nearly 300 kilometres from Pordenone, and between 1529 and 1532 in Cortemaggiore and Piacenza, around 330 kilometres from Pordenone, must have kept him away from his native region for long periods. In fact, even before 1520 Pordenone's career was marked by long travels, as we know that between 1516 and 1519 he had been to Alviano, in Umbria, and possibly Rome. Thus, Pordenone's mobile life trajectory seems more comparable to that of Lotto and Titian than Montagna, who, from the early 1480s, remained constantly tethered to the Vicentino, where he carried out most of his artistic commissions and investments in real estate. Indeed, aside from his potential sojourn in Venice in 1482 for the commission of two *teleri* for the Scuola di San Marco and his hypothetical trip to Pavia, Montagna received artistic commissions in Vicenza, Verona and Padua, or in small centres of these provinces. These centres were within easy reach for the painter, as their distance from Vicenza ranges from 15 to 45 kilometres. The former is the distance of Sandrigo and Sarmeola di Grumolo delle Abbadesse from Vicenza, while the latter is the distance between Vicenza and San Giovanni Ilarione, in the province of Verona. His artistic activity in places located within reasonably short distance from Vicenza must therefore be seen as conditional not only on his success as a painter in the *terraferma*, but also on his need to manage his manifold negotiations of land in the Vicentino. The numerous extant documents on such negotiations indeed enable to reconstruct Montagna's strong attachment to his native land. The same cannot be argued with respect

¹⁵⁷ Cohen (1996), p. 4.

to Palma Vecchio, although Philip Rylands has maintained that the painter, despite having worked in Venice for most of his life, preserved his connection with his place of birth of Serina, in the province of Bergamo.¹⁵⁸ If Palma painted several altarpieces for small centres of his native province, which suggests to Rylands that he regularly travelled to and from Serina, only two archival documents prove his presence in his hometown. The first notarial deed, drafted on 30 May 1524, records his presence in Serina to appoint the brothers Francesco and Comino Negretti as guardians of his brother Bartolomeo's children, Antonio and Giovanni Negretti.¹⁵⁹ In the second deed, drawn up in Serina on 13 June 1524, Palma and his nephews divide up Bartolomeo's property and the painter also pays a debt to Jacopo Armellini.¹⁶⁰ The other known documents simply attest that in Venice Palma maintained close ties with his native land, as evidenced by a notarial act drafted in Serina on 9 September 1527, when Bernardo Ruina and Comino Negretti purchased an orchard and a house on his behalf.¹⁶¹ This is his only known land investment in the Bergamasco, and his purchase of a land in Montagnana, near Padua, on 30 June 1523, when he was already living in Venice, suggests that geographical proximity to his residential place, as in Montagna's case, played a determining part in his investment strategy.¹⁶² Indeed, the distance between

¹⁵⁸ Rylands (1992), pp. 15-16.

¹⁵⁹ ASBg, *Notarile, Bonadeo fu Bernardino de Lavallo*, b. 905, cited in Elia Fornoni, *Notizie biografiche su Jacopo Palma Vecchio* (Bergamo: Cattaneo, 1886), p. 28; Gustav Ludwig, 'Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der venezianischen Malerei,' *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 24 (1903), pp. 66-67; Rylands (1992), pp. 16, 336-337.

¹⁶⁰ ASBg, *Notarile, Bonadeo fu Bernardino de Lavallo*, b. 905, cited in Fornoni (1886), p. 29; Ludwig (1903), pp. 67-68; Rylands (1992), pp. 16, 337.

¹⁶¹ ASBg, *Notarile, Bonadeo fu Bernardino de Lavallo*, b. 905, cited in Fornoni (1886), pp. 39-40; Rylands (1992), pp. 16, 23, 337.

¹⁶² ASVe, *Dieci Savi sopra le Decime a Rialto, Condizioni* 1514, San Stae, b. 69, n. 55, cited in Edward Cheney, 'Original Documents Relating to Venetian Painters and Their Pictures,' *Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society* 14 (London, 1872-1876), p. 75 (facsimile); Vincenzo Mikelli, 'Di Jacopo Palma il Vecchio e dell'arte contemporanea,' in *Atti della Reale Accademia di Belle Arti in Venezia dell'anno 1874* (Venice: Visentini, 1875), pp. 3-57; Ludwig (1903), p. 66; Pompeo

Venice and Montagnana, around 104 kilometres, is considerably shorter than that between Venice and Serina, around 260 kilometres. Further notarial acts drawn up in Venice prove that he preserved close relationships with his place of origin only by being in contact with the large community of Bergamasque immigrants in Venice. For instance, we know that in 1510 Palma, who was at the time based in the Venetian parish of San Giovanni in Bragora, served twice as a witness to the will of Sofia, the wife of Rocco Dossena, a canvas weaver from the Bergamasque village of Dossena,¹⁶³ while the inventory in the painter's will mentions a loan he made to an immigrant from Alzano, near Bergamo.¹⁶⁴ Overall, there is not enough documentary evidence on Palma's mobility and real estate activities to support Rylands' idea that the painter frequently travelled to his place of origin, while several notarial deeds prove his presence in Venice, where he is first documented in 1510¹⁶⁵ and lived until his death in 1528.

Scholars' reconstruction of Montagna's mobility has traditionally begun with his first documented trip to Venice in 1469. In particular, a notarial deed mentions the painter "in civitate Venetiarum" on 30 January 1469, when his brothers Giovanni, Paolo and Francesco Cincani divided up their family

Molmenti, *La storia di Venezia nella vita privata*, 3 vols (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1927-1929), vol. 2, p. 133; Rylands (1992), pp. 23, 336-337.

¹⁶³ ASVe, *Notarile, Testamenti, Bernardo Carvagnis*, b. 272, n. 629 (8 March 1510), cited in Gustav Ludwig, 'Bonifazio di Pitati da Verona, eine archivalische Untersuchung,' *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 22 (1901), p. 185 (with facsimile of signature); Id. (1903), p. 64; Rylands (1992), pp. 15, 335; ASVe, *Notarile, Testamenti, Bernardo Carvagnis*, b. 272, n. 629 (2 August 1510), cited in Bartolomeo Cecchetti, 'Saggio di cognomi ed autografi di artisti in Venezia, secoli XIV-XVI,' *Archivio Veneto* 33 (1887), p. 409; Ludwig (1903), p. 64; Rylands (1992), p. 335.

¹⁶⁴ ASVe, *Notarile, Testamenti*, b. 740, n. 159, cited in Bartolomeo Cecchetti, 'Archivio notarile di Venezia e di alcuni importanti documenti in esso custoditi,' *Atti dell'I.R. Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti* 8:3 (1862-1863), pp. 351, 361; Nicolò Barozzi, 'Testamento di Palma il Vecchio, con un inventario dei quadri trovatigli in casa dopo la sua morte,' *Raccolta veneta* 1 (1866), pp. 75-77; Ludwig (1903), pp. 70-71; Rylands (1992), p. 338.

¹⁶⁵ ASVe, *Notarile, Testamenti, Bernardo Carvagnis*, b. 272, n. 629, cited in Ludwig (1901), p. 185 (with facsimile of signature); Id. (1903), p. 64; Rylands (1992), pp. 15, 335.

heritage (App. 4, doct 6).¹⁶⁶ Nonetheless, Lucco has argued that Montagna might have gone to Venice as early as 31 January 1467, when his brothers sold 25 *campi* in Biron to Alvise Antonio Loschi on his behalf (App. 4, doct 5).¹⁶⁷ Given that the artist usually carried out his negotiations in person, it is hard to account for his absence in such a relevant agreement, according to which the 25 *campi* were sold for 907 *lire* and 12 *soldi*, the heftiest known sum gained by Montagna through a single transaction.¹⁶⁸ The artist's non-attendance at the drafting of such significant negotiations might have been due to his occasional supervision of his brother Giovanni's cloth warehouse in Venice from the late 1460s onward.¹⁶⁹ During his first stay in Venice in 1469, Montagna might have been apprenticed to Giovanni Bellini's workshop,¹⁷⁰ and became familiar with the art of the Vivarini, Andrea da Murano and Marco Zoppo. Venice, where Montagna is likely to have returned later, possibly in 1482 to paint the *San Marco Teleri*, was therefore the place in which the artist was introduced to the city's most innovative schools of painting and to the thriving local commerce. Lucco has not ruled out the possibility of further sojourns of the artist in Venice,¹⁷¹ although there is no evidence of his presence in the city after 1474, when he is first recorded in Vicenza, as proven by a notarial deed drafted on 28 August.¹⁷² It must be taken into account that the presence in Venice of

¹⁶⁶ ASVi, *Notarile, Daniele Ferretto*, b. 4618, anno 1469, fols 23v-24, 31r-32r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102-103; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 106-108.

¹⁶⁷ ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 106.

¹⁶⁸ It should be remembered that, on 7 October 1488, Montagna agreed to sell some plots of land in Orzinuovi for the considerable sum of 919 *lire* and 1 *soldo*. However, in this instance he received only about 103 ducats in cash and the rest in land. For further reference to this document, see ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 94-95, 105-106; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 125-126.

¹⁶⁹ Lucco (2014), p. 27.

¹⁷⁰ Coletti (1953), p. 67; Puppi (1962), p. 31.

¹⁷¹ Lucco (2014), p. 30.

¹⁷² ASVi, *Notarile, Antonio Sarasin*, b. 4970, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 89 note 6; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Lucco (2014), p. 108. The painter had resided in Vicenza since 1474, according to Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 97.

Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione and Titian, who monopolised the city's art market for decades, may have discouraged *terraferma* artists from seeking artistic commissions there. This was certainly the principal reason why, for instance, a gifted painter like Lorenzo Lotto struggled to be successful in Venice, his native city, and why he painted some of his masterpieces for Bergamo, the Marches and other provincial areas. It is likely that Montagna deemed Vicenza and the Vicentino to be ideal places where it was easier to earn a living as an artist and gain success due to less artistic competition.¹⁷³

The scarcity of documents mentioning Montagna between 1474 and 1482 is a major obstacle to our understanding of his early travels. The only two documented artistic commissions are the lost altarpiece commissioned from Montagna and Gianfrancesco Somaio in 1476 by the canon Gaspare of Schio for the Chapel of Santi Pietro e Giustina in the cathedral of Vicenza, and the lost *Piovene Altarpiece* commissioned from Montagna in 1478 for the church of Piovene, near Vicenza (App. 4, docts 9-10).¹⁷⁴ Similarly, there is evidence only of one real estate activity dated 10 May 1476, when the painter bought a plot of land in Orzinuovi for 25 gold ducats (App. 4, doct 8).¹⁷⁵ His investment campaign in the Vicentino is first documented on 16 September 1482,¹⁷⁶ although it was not until 1488 that Vicenza and its territory became the epicentre of Montagna's negotiations, as suggested by the documentary gap on real estate activities between 1484 and 1488 (Appendices 2 and 4, doct 14). As

¹⁷³ On the higher artistic competition in large centres than in outlying regions, see Bialostocki (1989), p. 51: "[...] a great center is a place where competition rules; this does not occur in a periphery where often one or a few artists monopolize various artistic tasks."

¹⁷⁴ ASVi, *Notarile*, *Gregorio Malo*, b. 4643, cited in Mantese (1964a), pp. 248-249 doct 1; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 109-110; ASVi, *Notarile*, *Francesco Sorio*, b. 4985, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 90, 103, 162-163 doct 34; Puppi (1962), pp. 30, 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 113.

¹⁷⁵ ASVi, *Notarile*, *Giovanni Antonio Gallo*, b. 5042, fol. 55, cited Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 109.

¹⁷⁶ ASVi, *Notarile*, *Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5097, anno 1482, fols 88-89, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 91, 103-104, 122; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 118.

regards this period of time, we have only one document of an artistic commission dated 9 March 1487, when the painter received 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi* for his lost frescoes in the Palazzo Comunale of Bassano (App. 4, doct 23).¹⁷⁷

The Vicentino, to judge from archival evidence, became the hub of Montagna's land investments between 1488 and 1489, when he invested 675 *lire* and 10 *soldi di piccoli* in plots of land located in Montecchio Maggiore, Ospedaletto, Borgo Berga, Montebello and Borgo di Porta Nuova (App. 2). There is, by contrast, no record of Montagna's artistic commissions from 1487 until 1490, when he was commissioned to paint the altarpiece for the Certosa di Pavia in Lombardy [Fig. 14; App. 3].¹⁷⁸ This work could be a useful example of the impact of mobility on style, even though we do not know whether the painter went to the Certosa or painted the altarpiece in his Vicentine workshop and sent it to Pavia. The assessment of Montagna's style in light of his displacement from Vicenza also helps us gain a more thorough understanding of his openness and original response to artistic otherness. Mauro Lucco has recently proposed that the artist travelled to Pavia,¹⁷⁹ although we have no archival evidence of his presence in the city. The only document on the Certosa commission is a seventeenth-century codex held in the Braidense Library in Milan, which mentions that the painting was commissioned by the Carthusian monks in 1490, yet it does not specify the date.¹⁸⁰ Since no Vicentine documents mention Montagna between 22 May and 16 December 1490, it is possible that he was not in Vicenza during that period of time. A

¹⁷⁷ ACB, *Comune di Bassano, Libri di cassa*, reg. 7.15, p. 145, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 44 doct 4; Borenius (1912), p. 8 note 2; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 124.

¹⁷⁸ BBM, AD XV 12, 20/26, cited in Borenius (1912), p. 40 note 1; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

¹⁷⁹ Lucco (2014), pp. 58-59.

¹⁸⁰ BBM, AD XV 12, 20/26, cited in Borenius (1912), p. 40 note 1; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

long absence from his Vicentine workshop might have been disadvantageous to the artist,¹⁸¹ and it could have been a novelty for him, inasmuch as his artistic and real estate activities took place mainly in a restricted area of the Veneto, the Vicentino. Lucco has also suggested that the perspective illusion and marked elongation of the lateral saints in the *Certosa di Pavia Altarpiece* might derive from Montagna's "mediated knowledge" of Bramante's frescoes of the *Men at Arms* in the Casa Visconti-Panigarola in Milan and *Christ at the Column*, now in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, both probably made in the late 1480s [Figs 77-78]. Montagna might also have been familiar, again according to Lucco, with Bramante's design of the *Ruined Temple*, replicated on a brass plate by the engraver Bernardino Prevedari in Milan in 1481 [Fig. 79].¹⁸² These hypotheses seem plausible, given the wide circulation of prints in Italy between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whose role in shaping artists' style calls for a brief digression on the concept of mobility. The latter should not only be referred to individuals but also movable works of art that could be largely available to artists in various geographical areas. In regard to this, David Young Kim has called attention to a passage in Giorgio Vasari's life of Jacopo Pontormo, in which the painter's unwise imitation of Dürer's manner in his frescoes at the Certosa del Galluzzo is seen as the consequence of the wide diffusion of reproductions of the German artist's engravings in Florence.¹⁸³ In other words, Vasari's passage prompts to reconsider mobility as an influential factor which may also be associated with works of art as well as artists. This

¹⁸¹ For a discussion on advantages and disadvantages of artistic commissions carried out on site or at a long range, see Peter Humfrey, *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 157-159.

¹⁸² Lucco (2014), pp. 58-59. For further reading on Bramante's *Ruined Temple*, see Christian Kleinbub, 'Bramante's "Ruined Temple" and the Dialectics of the Image,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 63:2 (Summer 2010), pp. 412-458.

¹⁸³ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, translated by George Bull, 2 vols (London: Penguin Books, 1987), vol. 2, p. 253; Young Kim (2014), p. 135.

line of thought enables to discuss the Bramantesque idiom of Montagna's works of the early 1490s in light of the impact that either his displacement or the ubiquity of mobile art objects, such as prints and drawings, might have had on his style. The Lombard manner of some works of art painted in the Republic of Venice during the early modern period has long been associated with the circulation of Bramantesque illustrations decorating Venetian printed works published between the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento. Giovanni Romano has indeed stressed the Bramantesque idiom characterising some woodcuts, which he attributed to a "Bramantesque illustrator," in Venetian texts first published in the late fifteenth century. According to Romano, the earliest illustrations by this anonymous artist appear in the *Libro de la natura de cavalli*, published in Venice in the early 1490s by Pietro Bergamasco, and are in the same Bramantesque manner as those in St Bernard's *Sermones*, published by Leonardus Pachel in Milan on 5 October 1495, and the *Antiquarie prospettiche romane composte per prospectivo melanese pittore*.¹⁸⁴ The diffusion of a Lombard style in altarpieces and fresco cycles made in north-east Italy has been investigated by several scholars. As early as the late nineteenth century, Bernard Berenson underlined the Bramantesque look of the monumental architecture in Lotto's *Colleoni-Martinengo Altarpiece*, painted between 1513 and 1516 for the church of Santi Stefano and Domenico in Bergamo [Fig. 80].¹⁸⁵ More recently, Bonita Cleri has drawn a compelling connection between the perspective illusion and architectural details of the barrel vault in Lotto's altarpiece and those of the barrel vault frescoed in the

¹⁸⁴ Giovanni Romano, 'La bibbia di Lotto,' *Paragone* 317-319 (1976), p. 83. See also Bonita Cleri, 'Bramante e Lotto: probabili incontri,' in *Lorenzo Lotto e le Marche: per una geografia dell'anima: Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, 14-20 Aprile 2007*, ed. Loretta Mozzoni (Florence: Giunti, 2009), p. 263.

¹⁸⁵ Bernard Berenson, *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1901, 2nd edition, first published 1895), p. 125.

early 1480s by Bramante in the choir of Santa Maria presso San Satiro in Milan [Fig. 81].¹⁸⁶ The painstaking depiction of the architecture in the *Colleoni-Martinengo Altarpiece* is to David Frapiccini symptomatic of the antiquarian interests developed by Lotto during his stay in Rome in 1509, and, above all, in the Marches between 1510 and 1512. In Rome Lotto might have seen the colonnade in the interior of the new St Peter's Basilica, which was being demolished yet was still partly in situ in the 1530s, as noticeable in a 1534 drawing by Maarten van Heemskerck [Fig. 82].¹⁸⁷ In the Marches Lotto was to Frapiccini in contact with two figures who had a keen interest in antiquities: the cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga, who had also been his commissioner in 1512, and the architect and sculptor Gian Cristoforo Romano, who studied, measured and made drawings of ancient monuments in Rome.¹⁸⁸ Aside from the possible influence of these personalities in the Marches, Lotto might also have drawn on a deep-seated Bramantesque idiom when he painted the *Colleoni-Martinengo Altarpiece* in Bergamo between 1513 and 1516. During the same years friar Damiano Zambelli executed the intarsia work of the choir stalls in the same church based on drawings which Marcantonio Michiel cited in 1525 and ascribed to Lombard artists, including Troso da Monza, Bernardo Zenale and others [Fig. 83].¹⁸⁹ According to Frapiccini, Lotto may have looked to Zambelli's work, which was to Michiel also based on drawings by Bramantino, who worked with Luca Signorelli and Lotto in the *Stanza di*

¹⁸⁶ Cleri (2009), p. 257.

¹⁸⁷ David Frapiccini, 'Lorenzo Lotto, Bramante e Loreto: verifiche intorno a una questione aperta (atto secondo),' in *Celebrazioni Bramantesche per i 500 anni dalla morte di Donato Bramante: atti del convegno, 5 e 6 dicembre 2014*, eds Christof Luitpold Frommel and Fabio Mariano (Rome: Istituto italiano dei castelli, 2016), p. 70.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 72, 74.

¹⁸⁹ Michiel (1903), pp. 77-78. See also Venturino Alce, *Fra Damiano intarsiatore e l'ordine domenicano a Bergamo* (Bergamo: Provincia di Bergamo, 1995), p. 176; Vittorio Polli, *Le tarsie di San Bartolomeo in Bergamo del Frate Damiano Zambelli* (Clusone: Ferrari, 1995), p. 31.

Eliodoro at the Vatican Apartments.¹⁹⁰ Studies on the impact of mobility on Lotto's manner not only show his tendency to incorporate elements of diverse origin into his works, but also evidence the diffusion in the Republic of Venice of a Lombard idiom, which Montagna assimilated in his works of the early 1490s.

A recurring Lombard pictorial language has been detected particularly in the fresco cycles of the Trevigiano. Federico Zeri pinpointed the influence of Bramante's *Men at Arms* in the Casa Visconti-Panigarola on the *Onigo Pages* in San Nicolò in Treviso, which he ascribed to the Vicentine Giovanni Buonconsiglio, Montagna's pupil, and dated around the mid-1490s [Figs 77, 84].¹⁹¹ In addition, Vittorio Sgarbi has identified the common Bramantesque origin of the decorative elements in several fresco cycles in the province, such as the friezes on the external walls of the Casa detta della Madonna di Gerolamo in Treviso and the Barco della Regina Cornaro in Altivole, near Treviso [Figs 85-86]. The winged horses, roundels and phytomorphic motifs of both friezes are to Sgarbi the most blatant example of a deep-seated Lombard pictorial language derived from Bramante's design of the *Ruined Temple* and his friezes in the Casa Fontana-Silvestri in Milan, now in the Civic Museums of the Castello Sforzesco [Fig. 79].¹⁹²

Admittedly, there are some beneficial effects of Montagna's hypothetical trip to Pavia that his indirect knowledge of Bramante's works through prints or drawings could not guarantee. The painter could have the opportunity to

¹⁹⁰ Frapiccini (2016), p. 76.

¹⁹¹ Federico Zeri, *Diari di lavoro 2* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), pp. 64, 70.

¹⁹² Vittorio Sgarbi, 'Il «fregio» di Castelfranco e la cultura bramantesca,' in *Giorgione. Atti del convegno internazionale di studio per il 5° centenario della nascita, 29-31 maggio 1978*, ed. Banca Popolare di Asolo e Montebelluna (Castelfranco Veneto: Comune di Castelfranco Veneto, 1979), pp. 277-278.

spread his fame beyond the Veneto, introduce himself to his commissioners and discuss iconographic and stylistic issues regarding the commission with them. In visiting the Certosa, Montagna could also gain a better understanding of the context in which the work was to be installed, notably its lighting and decoration. A trip to Pavia could certainly have been a chance for Montagna to discover and engage with Bramante's monumental manner and perspective characterising the structure of the Pavia cathedral, whose original plan Bramante drew up when summoned to Pavia in August and December 1488.¹⁹³ Had Montagna travelled to Pavia, he could have familiarised himself with Bramante's art also through his first-hand experience of the works painted at the Certosa by Bergognone, who is credited with importing a Bramantesque manner to Pavia, where he worked between 1484 and 1494 [Figs 87-90]. According to Laura De Zuani, Bergognone's foreshortened figures, alongside his almost sculptural handling of drapery and perspective representation of the pictorial space, are also characteristic of Montagna's *Certosa di Pavia Altarpiece* [Fig. 14].¹⁹⁴ Two more paintings made by Montagna in the early 1490s which evidence a Bramantesque pictorial language are the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *Blessing St Peter with Donor*, formerly in the Papafava collection in Padua [Figs 7, 91].¹⁹⁵ However, as noted by Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, a Lombard emphasis on perspective and sculptural treatment of drapery is already noticeable in Montagna's *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Francis and Bernardino of Siena*, painted between 1484 and 1485 for the church of Santi Bernardino e Chiara in Vicenza [Fig. 13].¹⁹⁶ The same sculptural monumentality and foreshortened depiction of the figures, and perspective representation of

¹⁹³ Arnaldo Bruschi, *Bramante* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 46.

¹⁹⁴ De Zuani (2015), pp. 103-105.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 106-108.

¹⁹⁶ Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa in Lucco (2014), p. 320.

the pictorial space, feature in Montagna's *Sts Jerome and Paul*, painted between 1480 and 1485 and now in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan [Fig. 92]. The foreshortened cross vault of the chapel-like space painted in the *Trento Altarpiece* (1484-85) is yet another early example of Montagna's preoccupation with perspective, which has been related to his knowledge of the cross vaults of the cloister of the monastery of San Bartolomeo, designed in the same years by Lorenzo da Bologna [Figs 2, 93].¹⁹⁷ In light of this, I believe that the painter's potential first-hand experience of the Bramantesque manner in Pavia could have rekindled and increased his interest in three-dimensional representation of space and monumental depiction of the figures. Artists' researches in specific compositional modes as a result of exposure to a foreign environment are noticeable in certain works by Pordenone and Raphael. The former's discovery of a grand, plastic central-Italian manner during his trips to Alviano in Umbria, and potentially Rome, must be seen, as noted by Charles Cohen, as an outgrowth of the painter's growing interest in foreshortening and plasticity of form that already characterised his earlier works.¹⁹⁸ This is evidenced by the *romanità* of Pordenone's fresco of the *Madonna and Two Saints (St Jerome and a papal saint)*, made between 1516 and 1519 for the parish church of Alviano [Fig. 94]. The fresco is clearly reminiscent of the solemn figures painted by Raphael and Michelangelo, notwithstanding the difficulties which, according to Cohen, Pordenone encountered in reusing these models. Similarly, according to Vasari, Raphael's encounter with the art of Leonardo and Michelangelo in Florence and Rome was the cause for an augmentation of his study and depiction of the human figure, through which he aimed to improve his style. If the interaction with Leonardo's works increased Raphael's

¹⁹⁷ De Zuani (2015), pp. 65-66.

¹⁹⁸ Cohen (1996), p. 121.

interest in the figures' grace and movement, his admiration for Michelangelo's muscular nudes and ability to paint them from different viewpoints spurred him to pursue the studies of anatomy and foreshortening with great ardour.¹⁹⁹ Pordenone's and Raphael's attention to certain modes of expression of the greatest High Renaissance painters is comparable to Montagna's researches in perspective and foreshortening in his Bramantesque works.

It is however likely that, aside from his hypothetical trip to Pavia in 1490, Montagna mainly travelled in the Vicentino to look after his land business between 1488 and 1491. The same goes for the 1490s, when Montagna continued to buy and sell plots of land in the Vicentino, notably in Montebello, Borgo San Felice, San Lazzaro, Borgo Berga, Monteviale and Camisano. The painter also sold nine *campi* in Orzinuovi on 13 November 1497 and ten *campi* in Cittadella on 5 November 1499 (App. 4, docts 46, 50).²⁰⁰ Although these sales were notarised in Vicenza, the possibility of Montagna travelling to Orzinuovi and Cittadella to carry out these negotiations cannot be ruled out. As regards artistic commissions in the 1490s, the notarial deeds on the Proti and Squarzi commissions, and on the commission of the altarpiece for the bishop of Vicenza Giovanni Battista Zeno, evidence that the painter worked in Vicenza in the latter half of the decade (Figs 5, 15-16; App. 3).²⁰¹ A documentary gap on artistic commissions covers the period 1491-1495,

¹⁹⁹ Vasari (1987), vol. 1, pp. 290, 315-317; Vasari (1996), vol. 1, pp. 716, 740-741.

²⁰⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "Francesco Scolari. 1497-1498", fols [1-2], cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 133-134; ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501", fols [6-9v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 136.

²⁰¹ IPAB, *Ospedale dei Proti*, b. 32 "Libri partite degli affittuali dell'Ospedale. 1492-1497", reg. 17, fols 117v-118r, cited in Luca Clerici 'Tra storia socio-economica e storia dell'arte: Lorenzo da Bologna nella campagna vicentina di fine Quattrocento e Bartolomeo Montagna nel duomo di Vicenza,' *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa* 30:59 (2001), pp. 162-163 doct 7; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 131-132; Magrini (1863), pp. 34, 44-47 doct 5; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 132-133; ASVi, *Notarile, Bartolomeo Aviano*, b. 4740, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 35, 47-48 doct 6; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109, 166-167 doct 38; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 134-135.

although the numerous real estate activities carried out by Montagna in those years indicate that he was mainly based in Vicenza.

The reconstruction of Montagna's mobility in the Venetian mainland in the first two decades of the sixteenth century is hindered by the paucity of documents on both his artistic and real estate activities. Until the outbreak of the war of the League of Cambrai in 1508, the artist is cited in only four archival documents, two of which attest that he painted in Verona and Padua in 1504 and 1506, respectively. In Verona he frescoed the San Biagio Chapel in the church of Santi Nazaro e Celso, while in Padua he frescoed one hundred portraits of Paduan bishops in the Palazzo Vescovile [Figs 22-23].²⁰² It is therefore likely that Montagna spent long periods of time away from Vicenza between 1504 and 1506. In regard to this, Lucco has noted that the painter's work in the San Biagio Chapel was particularly intense between 24 March and 19 October 1504, as proven by the payments recorded in the account book of the Scuola di San Biagio (App. 4, doct 52).²⁰³ However, Verona is only around 58 kilometres from Vicenza, so it is feasible that, if necessary, Montagna could travel back to his place of residence even during busy periods of work. The other two documents citing Montagna in the 1500s, which mention his land

²⁰² ASVr, *Corporazioni religiose, Santi Nazaro e Celso*, b. 14, reg. n. 36 "Libro de entra' e spexa de la Compagnia", fols 74r-76r, 118v-121r, cited in Giuseppe Biadego, 'La cappella di San Biagio nella chiesa dei Santi Nazaro e Celso,' *Nuovo archivio veneto* 11:2 (1906), pp. 116-118; Borenius (1909), pp. 215-217; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 137-139; ASP, *Notarile, Melchiorre Lovato*, b. 3395, fol. 453v, cited in Paolo Sambin, 'Nuovi documenti per la storia della pittura in Padova dal XIV al XVI secolo. I. Prospero da Piazzola, Bartolomeo Montagna, Jacopo da Montagnana, Jacopo da Feltre, Nicoletto da Modena,' *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova* 51:1 (1962), p. 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 140; ASP, *Notarile, Melchiorre Lovato*, b. 3395, fol. 446, cited in Sambin (1962), pp. 122-123 doct 7; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 140-141.

²⁰³ Lucco (2014), p. 76.

negotiations, relate that he was in Vicenza on 15 February 1503 and 20 May 1508 (App. 4, docts 51, 56).²⁰⁴

It is not clear where Montagna was based during the years of the war of the League of Cambrai (1508-1516). Puppi has argued that Montagna fled to Padua during the war, on the grounds that the painter is not mentioned in the documents from 18 August 1509 to 1514 (App. 4, docts 58, 62).²⁰⁵ Lucco, on the contrary, has noted that Padua was not a safe place inasmuch as it was ravaged until the very end of the conflict, while Vicenza suffered the turmoil only for a few years, until it came under Leonardo Trissino's control.²⁰⁶ Notwithstanding the lack of documents on the artist's real estate transactions, which is conditional on the conflict's devastating effects on crops, two artistic commissions are mentioned in the documents between 1508 and 1516. The first document records that Montagna was in Padua on 6 February 1512, when he agreed with the guardian Nicola de Strata to paint the fresco of *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone* in the Scuola del Santo [Fig. 24; App. 4, doct 61].²⁰⁷ The other documented artistic commission is the *Santa Corona Altarpiece* for Piera Porto, which was contracted on 9 October 1509 and was still being painted on 16 June 1514 [Fig. 6; App. 4, docts 59, 62].²⁰⁸ In light of this, the

²⁰⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501", fol. [5v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 136-137; ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1508", fols [1-2], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 98, 110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 141.

²⁰⁵ Puppi (1975), p. 23. In fact, Montagna is cited in Vicenza on 12 March 1510: ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1509-1512", cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 36, 99; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 144.

²⁰⁶ Lucco (2014), pp. 82-83. On this, see Cesira Gasparotto, 'Padova nella Repubblica di San Marco (1405-1797)', in *Padova. Guida ai monumenti e alle opere d'arte*, eds Marcello Checchi, Luigi Gaudenzio and Lucio Grossato (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1961), pp. CLVIII-CLXIII; Luigi da Porto, 'Lettere storiche di Luigi da Porto', in *Vicenza illustrata*, ed. Neri Pozza (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1976), pp. 168-169.

²⁰⁷ ASP, *Notarile, Gaspare de Salieri*, b. 2700, fols 296v-297r, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 144-145.

²⁰⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5306, cited in Giovanni Mantese, 'Tre cappelle gentilizie nelle chiese di San Lorenzo e di Santa Corona. I. La cappella Caldogno – II. Il giureconsulto

painter was probably based in Vicenza during the war, as also argued by Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa.²⁰⁹ The fresco of *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone* in the Scuola del Santo is yet another example of the painter's response to artistic otherness provoked by his displacement. The impact on Montagna's style of the frescoes painted in 1511 by a still young Titian in the same hall of the Scuola has long been pointed out [Figs 31-33]. Montagna was inspired especially by Titian's tonalism, unconstrained composition and wide range of the figures' gestures and emotions.²¹⁰ If it is true that the figures in the *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone* are unencumbered by the layout of the composition, the artist's ability to capture human feelings and emphasise the expressiveness of the figures does not seem to be a novelty. Montagna had already showcased his inexhaustible capability of varying the figures' poses and gestures in the one hundred portraits of Paduan bishops frescoed in 1506 in the Palazzo Vescovile in Padua [Figs 23, 95].²¹¹ Upon closer inspection, the gestures and facial expressions of the bishops *Joannes* and *Bernardus* bear a close resemblance to those of the friar wearing a grey cassock and of the priest in a purple robe depicted in *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone*. However, unlike the free arrangement of the figures in *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone*, the bishops frescoed in the Palazzo Vescovile are portrayed in groups of two

Giulio Capra e il suo altare a San Lorenzo – III. La cappella di Piera da Porto Pagello a S. Corona e la pala di B. Montagna: nuovi documenti,' *Odeo Olimpico* 7 (1968-1969), pp. 252-255 doct 4; Carlo Alberto Bucci, 'Pietra Porto in due pale di Bartolomeo Montagna,' *Venezia Cinquecento: studi di storia dell'arte e della cultura* 1 (1991), p. 24 note 33; ASVi, *Notarile*, *Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5307, cited in Mantese (1968-1969), pp. 255-257 doct 4; Bucci (1991), p. 24 note 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 146-147.

²⁰⁹ Villa in Lucco (2014), p. 372.

²¹⁰ Lucco (2014), pp. 84-85. See also Elizabeth Carroll, 'Ripensando Bartolomeo Montagna e La Terra di Nessuno: l'identità artistica a Vicenza nel primo Cinquecento,' in *Uomini del contado e uomini di città nell'Italia settentrionale del XVI secolo. Atti del convegno internazionale di storia, arte e architettura*, eds Edoardo Demo and Andrea Savio (Palermo: New Digital Frontiers, 2017), p. 373.

²¹¹ Lucco (2014), p. 77. Montagna's ability as a portraitist has long been noted by scholars, such as Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who emphasised his "realism in portraiture." For further reference, see Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1912), p. 130.

separated from one another by a painted frame. In light of this, what Montagna drew from Titian's frescoes in the Scuola del Santo was not so much the compositional formula of a wide range of figures showing different reactions as the unconstrained accommodation of them in a large-scale multi-figural composition. In addition, the true-to-life craggy landscape in the backdrop of Montagna's fresco is symptomatic of the strong visual impact that the very similar naturalistic background in Titian's fresco of *The Miracle of the Jealous Husband* must have had on the Vicentine painter [Fig. 32]. Yet Montagna's sensitivity to nature is already visible in the backgrounds of his frescoes made in 1504 in the San Biagio Chapel in the church of Santi Nazaro e Celso in Verona, particularly in the fresco of *St Blaise as Hermit* [Fig. 96]. The jagged rock mass behind the saint in this fresco also features in the landscapes painted by Titian and Montagna in their frescoes at the Scuola del Santo. Once again, Montagna proved to be a skillful manipulator of artistic impulses, inasmuch as his response to Titian's manner and compositional strategies resulted in the selection and critical adaptation of elements in which he had already shown an interest.

Another Renaissance artist whose style has been reappraised in light of his mobility is, as noted earlier, Lorenzo Lotto. David Young Kim has argued that the painter's pictorial idiom varied according to the artistic environment in which he painted, as in the case of two paintings of *St Jerome*. In discussing Lotto's *Penitent St Jerome* in Castel Sant'Angelo he has highlighted the influence of the classicising art of Michelangelo and Raphael then visible in Rome, where the work was painted in 1509, on the painter's depiction of Jerome's complexion [Fig. 97]. Lotto's *Penitent St Jerome* now in the Brukenthal Museum

of Sibiu, painted in Bergamo in the years 1513-1515 at the request of a local commissioner, is characterised by a life-like and minute depiction of detail, such as the grasshopper, snakes and a bird's skeleton in the foreground [Fig. 98]. Young Kim has hailed this painstaking attention to detail, which is peculiar to Renaissance painting north of the Alps, as a sign of Lotto's promptness to resituate his style "with Venetian and Lombard painting practice" on his return to the north of Italy.²¹² Thus, travelling gave Lotto and Montagna a chance to be confronted with artists belonging to different artistic traditions and schools of painting, and their assimilation of artistic otherness stands testament to how displacement could impact upon their style.

As regards the years 1517-1523, seven documents on Montagna's real estate activities notarised in Vicenza suggest that he was still regularly based in the city (App. 4, docts 63, 65-69, 71). Only two documents refer to artistic commissions carried out by Montagna during these years. The first document, dated 24 November 1517, records some payments to the painter and his son Benedetto for unknown paintings in the Palazzo del Podestà of Vicenza (App. 4, doct 64).²¹³ In the second document, drafted in Vicenza on 4 November 1521, we read that Montagna painted the *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece* for the Scuola di San Giuseppe [Fig. 25; App. 4, doct 71].²¹⁴ This might have been one of the artist's last trips, although, as in the case of the *Certosa di Pavia Altarpiece* [Fig. 14], we do not know whether he went to Cologna Veneta, located approximately 38 km from Vicenza, or painted the work in his Vicentine

²¹² Young Kim (2014), pp. 12-13, 16, 24.

²¹³ BBVi, *Archivio del Comune di Vicenza, Libri delle provvisioni*, vol. 795, fol. 106, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 148.

²¹⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fols 140v-141v, cited in Borenus (1909), pp. 217-218; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 167-168 doct 40; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 152-153.

workshop and dispatched it to the Scuola.

In conclusion, I have reconstructed Montagna's mobility by relying on the evidence provided by published archival documents on both his artistic commissions and real estate activities. I have shown that notarial deeds on Montagna's real estate activities are critical to our understanding of his travels, especially in the late 1480s and the first half of the 1490s, as we have no documents on artistic commissions dating from those years. In addition, I have highlighted the artist's critical response to artistic otherness provoked by his displacement, which prompted him not only to absorb artistic elements of diverse origin, but also elaborate on stylistic and compositional aspects that he had already experimented with in his earlier works.

1.5 Rethinking Montagna's Art and Commissioners

The purpose of this section is to investigate and stress the importance of some overlooked aspects of Montagna's art, such as eclecticism, variation and invention, and commissioners, in particular their aesthetic needs and taste.

Eclecticism

The concept of "eclecticism" was first used in art history by Johann Joachim Winckelmann in 1763.²³² Winckelmann compared the eclectic manner of antique philosophers, who combined ideas of their great predecessors, with the art of the Carracci, who merged the manners of the great painters of the Classical era and the Renaissance.²³³ Yet Denis Mahon argued that it was not until the nineteenth century that a proper theory on eclecticism was put forward. He questioned the validity of the use of this label with reference to early modern art by arguing that some writers misunderstood the idea of eclecticism formulated in the late sixteenth century by Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo in his treatise *L'idea del tempio della pittura*.²³⁴ In Lomazzo's mind, the figure of Adam ought to be drawn by Michelangelo, coloured by Titian and should have the proportion and convenience of Raphael, whereas Eve ought to be drawn by Raphael and coloured by Correggio.²³⁵ The misreading of this

²³² Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Abhandlung von der Fähigkeit der Empfindung des Schönen in der Kunst, und dem Unterrichte in derselben* (Dresden: In der Waltherischen Buchhandlung, 1763), p. 26.

²³³ Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (Dresden: Walther, 1764), pp. 235, 248; Rudolf Wittkower, 'Imitation, Eclecticism, and Genius,' in *Aspects of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Earl R. Wasserman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), p. 152.

²³⁴ Denis Mahon, 'Eclecticism and the Carracci: Further Reflections on the Validity of a Label,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16:3/4 (1953), p. 305 (see in particular note 1).

²³⁵ Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *L'idea del tempio della pittura* (Milan: Per Paolo Gottardo Pontio, 1590), p. 60. On the painting as a source of inspiration of Caravaggio's *Madonna and Child with St Anne*, also known as *Madonna dei Palafrenieri*, see Stefano Pierguidi, 'Nascita e diffusione di

example of ideal representation of Adam and Eve in painting, in Mahon's view, would have contributed to the making of Lomazzo's reputation as the harbinger of the use of eclecticism in art theory.²³⁶

Mahon's conviction that "a full-blown theory of eclecticism" was not "a real, live issue"²³⁷ between the 1550s and 1650s is questionable, given that eclecticism in painting was a recurring theme in Italian and French art theory between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To begin with, in the life of Raphael Vasari relates that the painter selected "from the best work of other masters" and "out of many manners he made one, which was looked upon even afterwards as his own."²³⁸ Vasari's account of Raphael's selective method is reminiscent of the anecdote of the ancient painter Zeuxis, who went to Croton to make a painting of Helen by combining the best features of five beautiful virgins of that city. The anecdote was much cited or alluded to both in antiquity, by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia*²³⁹ and Cicero in his *De Inventione*,²⁴⁰ and the Renaissance, especially in Leon Battista Alberti's *De Pictura*²⁴¹ and Raphael's letter to Baldassarre Castiglione, written in 1514, in which he explained how he created his fresco of *Galatea* for the Villa Chigi in Rome.²⁴²

Similarly, a passage of Lomazzo's *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura, et architettura*, first published in 1584, mentions the industrious concoction of the

una rara iconografia dell'Immacolata Concezione: da Figino e Caravaggio a Bourdon e Quellinus II,' *Arte Lombarda* 157:3 (2009), pp. 39-48.

²³⁶ Mahon (1953), pp. 316-317.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

²³⁸ Vasari (1996), vol. 1, p. 743.

²³⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, 36 vols, vol. 35:36, in *Storia delle arti antiche*, ed. Silvio Ferri (Milan: Rizzoli, 2000), p. 185; Young Kim (2014), p. 131.

²⁴⁰ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Inventione*, 2 vols, vol. 2:1, in *L'invenzione retorica*, ed. Amedeo Pacitti (Milan: Mondadori, 1967), pp. 158 ff.; Young Kim (2014), p. 131.

²⁴¹ Leon Battista Alberti, *De pictura*, 3 vols, vol. 3:59, ed. Cecil Grayson (Rome; Bari: Laterza, 1980), p. 96; Young Kim (2014), p. 131.

²⁴² Raffaello Sanzio, *Lettera al Castiglione*, in *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento*, ed. Paola Barocchi, 3 vols (Milan; Naples: Ricciardi, 1971-1977), vol. 2, pp. 1529-1531, especially p. 1530; Young Kim (2014), p. 131.

best manners in Ambrogio Figino's lost painting of the *Madonna of the Snake*, formerly in the Milanese church of San Fedele. A version of the same subject by Figino is in the Oratorio dell'Immacolata in Milan [Fig. 99]. Lomazzo relates that Figino created his pictures by merging "Leonardo's light and shade contrasts and accuracies, Raphael's harmonious majesties, Correggio's vague colours and Michelangelo's contours."²⁴³ A thought-out selection of the best and most suitable pictorial idioms and compositional formulas is also recommended in Giovanni Battista Armenini's *De' veri precetti della pittura*, first published in 1587. In this treatise Armenini advises fledgeling artists to copy various and progressively more complex models for the purpose of achieving a "fine and learned manner."²⁴⁴ In keeping with Michelangelo's thought, Armenini seems to suggest that pupils in training should refrain from imitating one master only, as to do so would hinder them from outdoing their model. The young artist should therefore identify and imitate specific masters, from whom he has to absorb simply what is most suited to his own style.²⁴⁵ All the aforementioned theories were implemented by contemporary artists such as Tintoretto, who sought to combine Titian's colour with the drawing of

²⁴³ Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura, et architettura* (Milan: Per Paolo Gottardo Pontio, 1584), pp. 437-438: "[...] e come parimenti appresso de gl'altri il Ficino nostro discepolo il quale con simile prudenza, & industria di molte altre parti le sue rare pitture v' componendo con parte de l'ombre lumi, & d'accuratezze di Leonardo, con le maestà armoniche di Raffaello, con i vaghi colori del Coregio, e co'l disegno d'intorno di Michel'Angelo perseverando così con tali parti à disporre in opera quello che secondo il suo genio particolare concepisce nella mente, come si vede trà le altre in una tavola dove hà dipinto la Vergine co'l figliuolo apresso che calca con un piede il collo dell'antico serpente, laquale si ritrova nella Chiesa di Santo Fedele di Milano."

²⁴⁴ Giovanni Battista Armenini, *De' veri precetti della pittura: libri tre*, 3 vols (Venice: F. Salerni, 1678, 2nd edition, first published 1587), vol. 1, pp. 36 ff.

²⁴⁵ Giovanni Battista Armenini, *De' veri precetti della pittura: libri tre*, 3 vols (Pisa: presso Niccolò Capurro, 1823, 4th edition, first published 1587), vol. 3, p. 255: "Vantandosi uno scultore, il quale avea imitato figure antiche di marmo, dicendo di averle migliorate, gli rispose: chi va dietro ad altri mai li passa innanzi, e chi prima non sa bene da sè, male si può servire delle cose d'altri."

Michelangelo, and Pellegrino Tibaldi, who aspired to blend Michelangelo's *terribilità* with Raphael's elegance.²⁴⁶

Another literary source that stands testament to early modern critics' awareness of eclecticism in art is the text of the oration written in 1602 by Lucio Faberio, a member of the Bolognese Accademia de' Gelati, for Agostino Carracci's funeral. According to Faberio, "Agostino's goal was to gather the perfection of many (artists), and build them into a new body in which nothing better could be wished," and his idea of perfection consisted in piecing together "the pride and confidence of Michelangelo, the softness and delicacy of Titian, the grace and majesty of Raphael, and the ability of Correggio." Furthermore, Agostino is praised by Faberio for adding "his rare and peculiar inventions and dispositions" to these perfections,²⁴⁷ which implies that Agostino did not passively absorb various excellent manners, but handled them originally. In light of this, Mahon's rejection of the Carracci's doctrine of selection of the best facets from the greatest masters is a moot point. Mahon's denial hinges on his conviction that a selective method was not devised by the Carracci, but rather associated with them by the *letterato* Faberio, thereby stemming from a literary as opposed to artistic environment.²⁴⁸ However, it has been persuasively argued that Faberio must have been particularly familiar with their theories on art and their works of art, given his role as secretary of the

²⁴⁶ Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 159.

²⁴⁷ Lucio Faberio, *Il funerale d'Agostin Carraccio fatto in Bologna sua patria dagl'Incaminati Academici del Disegno scritto all'ill.mo et r.mo sig.r cardinal Farnese* (Bologna: Presso Vittorio Benacci, 1603), p. 40. Also published in Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: vite de' pittori bolognesi* (Bologna: Forni, 1841, 3rd edition, first published 1678), pp. 307-308: "Il fine del nostro Carracci era di cumular'insieme la perfettion di molti, e con perfetta armonia ridurle in un corpo in cui nulla di meglio si potesse bramare [...]. Con tutto ciò nell'opere, che di lui ci sono rimaste si vede chiaramente la fierezza, e sicurezza di Michelangelo, la morbidezza, e delicatezza di Tiziano, la gratia, e maestà di Raffaello, la vaghezza, e facilità del Correggio, alle quali perfettioni havendo egli aggiunto le sue rari, e singolari inventioni, & dispositioni [...]."

²⁴⁸ Mahon (1971), pp. 205, 209.

Accademia degli Incamminati founded by the Carracci.²⁴⁹ Hence, the doctrine of eclecticism was not confined to the literary circles, as thought by Mahon, given that an eclectic doctrine originated from both the Carracci's art and teaching.

An echo of the eulogistic tone of Faberio's oration is found in two treatises published only a few years later. In Giovan Battista Agucchi's *Treatise on Painting*, written between 1607 and 1615, Agostino and Annibale Carracci are praised for merging "the much refined drawing of Rome" with "the beauty of Lombard colour" with a view to "creating a manner of sovereign perfection."²⁵⁰ In the wake of Agucchi, Giulio Mancini, writing around 1619, extolled the Carracci's combination of Raphael's style with the Lombard manner.²⁵¹ In French artistic literature a reference to Annibale Carracci's eclectic method is made by Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy in his *De arte graphica*, a didactic poem in Latin written in the years 1641-1665 and first published in 1668, shortly after the author's death. Dufresnoy praised Annibale Carracci for succeeding in absorbing the excellent styles of Renaissance painters such as Titian, Correggio and Raphael.²⁵² In the same vein, in his speech delivered in the Académie Royale in Paris on 5 November 1667, Charles Le Brun expressed his appreciation for Poussin's eclectic combination of the good facets of the art

²⁴⁹ Rensselaer W. Lee, 'Review of *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory* by Denis Mahon,' *The Art Bulletin* 33:3 (September 1951), p. 211.

²⁵⁰ Agucchi in Mahon (1971), p. 252: "Subito che videro le Statue di Roma, e le Pitture di Rafaele, e Michelangelo, e contemplando specialmente quelle di Rafaele; confessarono ritrovarsi per entro più alto intendimento, e maggior finezza di disegno, che nell'opere di Lombardia: e giudicarono, che per costituire una maniera d'una sovrana perfettione, converrebbe col disegno finissimo di Roma unire la bellezza del colorito Lombardo."

²⁵¹ BMVe, MS it. 5571, fol. 145 r: "Questa [i.e., seconda scuola] ha per proprio l'Intelligenza dell'arte con gratia espression d'affetto, proprietà e composition d'historia, havendo congioint' Insieme la maniera di Raffaello con quella di Lombardia, perche vede il natrale, lo possiede, ne piglia il buono, lascia il cattivo lo migliora, et con lume naturale gli dà il colore, e l'ombra, con le movenze e gratie."

²⁵² Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy, *De arte graphica*, eds Christopher Allen, Yasmin Haskell and Frances Muecke (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2005, first published 1668), p. 208: "Fortunaeque bonis, quos sedulus ANNIBAL omnes / In propriam mentem atque modum mira Arte coegit."

of Raphael, Titian and Veronese.²⁵³ The combination of great masters' manners and their translation into a new, personal idiom was also stressed by Roger de Piles in his description of Annibale Carracci's eclectic style.²⁵⁴

Another useful source for tracing the origins of eclecticism in artistic literature is Marco Boschini's *Le ricche minere della pittura veneziana*, first published in 1664. In describing Palma Vecchio's *St Barbara Altarpiece* in the Venetian church of Santa Maria Formosa [Fig. 100], Boschini narrates that those who saw the painting did not expect to find in it a mixture of "grace, beauty, artifice, diligence, softness, modesty, decorum, symmetry, and all the major expressions, that can be ascribed to Raphael, to Titian, to Correggio, and to all those who are celebrated for being singular [...]"²⁵⁵ These words revive Lomazzo's and Lucio Faberio's ideas, which in fact pertain to the eclectic style of Figino and Agostino Carracci, who worked between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Boschini's *ekphrasis* of Palma's work, painted in the early 1520s, shows that an eclectic pictorial manner has also been associated with painters who worked in the first half of the Cinquecento. Another example is Francesco Ubertini (1494-1557), also known as "Bachiacca," who met his purchasers' demand by making paintings in which he deftly merged compositional formulas and motifs drawn from a number of renowned artists of his day. This method has been illustrated by Herbert Friedmann and

²⁵³ André Félibien, *Conférences de l'académie royale de peinture et de sculpture pendant l'année 1667* (Paris: chez Frederic Leonard, 1669), p. 78.

²⁵⁴ Roger de Piles, *L'art de Peinture, de C. A. Du Fresnoy, Traduit en François, Enrichy de Remarques, & augmenté d'un Dialogue sur le Coloris* (Paris: Nicolas Langlois, 1673), pp. 84-88.

²⁵⁵ Marco Boschini, *Le ricche minere della pittura veneziana* (Venice: Appresso Francesco Nicolini, 1674, 2nd edition, first published 1664), p. 44: "[...] nella Tavola d'Altare in Santa Maria Formosa (Boschini alludes to Palma Vecchio's altarpiece), fatta per la Scuola de Bombardieri, che, capitando qual si voglia diletante, ed intendente in Venezia, di subito procura di veder questo unico tesoro, trovando ogn'uno di più di quello aspettava, essendovi unite così in quella Idea, come in tutta la figura la grazia, la bellezza, l'artificio, la diligenza, la morbidezza, la modestia, il decoro, la simmetria, e tutte l'espressioni maggiori, che si può attribuire à Rafaele, à Tiziano, al Correggio, & à quanti con il maggior carattere di Pittura hoggidì sono celebrati per singolari, & in fine questa può dirsi il Centro della perfezione, e l'unico dell'Arte..."

Howard Merritt in their analysis of Bachiacca's painting of the *The Gathering of Manna*, now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington [Fig. 101]. Friedmann and Merritt highlighted the painter's successful collage of figures drawn from works by Raphael, Fra Bartolomeo and Michelangelo.²⁵⁶ Bachiacca's setting of Italian figures against a landscape, inspired by the landscapes painted by Lucas van Leyden, was an eclectic formula also adopted by the printmaker Marcantonio Raimondi in his early engravings. Netherlandish painting inspired Bachiacca in his choice of figures, backgrounds, highly polished pictorial surface and painstaking attention to detail. The painter's shrewd combination and manipulation of artistic elements of diverse origin have been considered by Robert La France as a sign of his awareness of the artists and schools of painting that were particularly in vogue in his day. Bachiacca's interest in creating a style which could appeal to the most up-to-date clients has also been hailed by La France as a sign of his market-determined behaviour.²⁵⁷

Eclecticism in late sixteenth-century Italian art is the focus of two seventeenth-century works by Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice* and *Il clauastro di S. Michele in Bosco di Bologna*. In the "Vita di Francesco Primaticcio" of his *Felsina pittrice*, first published in 1678, Malvasia mentions a sonnet in praise of the painter Nicolò dell'Abate, attributing it to Agostino Carracci.

The sonnet runs as follows:

He who seeks and wishes to be a good painter,

²⁵⁶ Herbert Friedmann, 'Bachiacca's 'Gathering of Manna' in the National Gallery,' *Gazette des beaux arts* 32 (1947), pp. 151-158; Howard Sutermeister Merritt, 'Bachiacca's Studies: the Uses of Imitation,' Ph.D. thesis (Princeton University 1958), pp. 117-128.

²⁵⁷ Robert La France, 'Bachiacca's Formula for Success,' in *The Art Market in Italy (15th-17th Centuries)*, eds Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (Modena: Panini, 2003), pp. 237-238.

Let him acquire the design of Rome,
 Venetian shade and action,
 And the dignified colouring of Lombardy.
 The terrible manner of Michelangelo,
 The natural truth of Titian,
 The pure and sovereign style of Correggio,
 And the true symmetry of a Raphael.
 The decorum and fundamental knowledge of Tibaldi,
 The invention of the learned Primaticcio,
 And a little of Parmigianino's grace.
 But without much study and difficulty,
 He only needs to imitate the works,
 Which our Niccolino has left us here.²⁵⁸

The sonnet is a list of perfections that, in Agostino's opinion, ought to be pieced together by painters in order to create a complete work. The same eclectic method is ascribed to Ludovico Carracci by Malvasia in a passage from the *Felsina pittrice* that he recorded in *Il claustro di S. Michele in Bosco di Bologna*:

Taking the best from all the best painters, with an unusual and pleasing facility, Ludovico created a condensed synthesis, indeed a precious essence [...] and joining Raphael's exactness with Michelangelo's knowledge, and adding to

²⁵⁸ Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: vite de' pittori bolognesi* (Bologna: Forni, 1967, 5th edition, first published 1678), p. 129: Chi farsi un buon pittor cerca e desia / Il disegno di Roma abbia alla mano, / La mossa, coll'ombrar Veneziano, / E il degno colorir di Lombardia. / Di Michelangioli la terribil via, / Il vero natural di Tiziano, / Del Correggio lo stil puro e sovrano, / E di un Rafael la giusta simetria. / Del Tibaldi il decoro e il fondamento, / Del dotto Primaticcio l'inventare, / E un pò di grazia del Parmigianino. / Ma senza tanti studi e tanto stento, / Si ponga solo l'opre ad imitare, / Che qui lasciassi il nostro Nicolino.

these Titian's colour and the angelic purity of Correggio, he formed out of all these manners a single one that is by no means inferior to the Roman, the Florentine, the Venetian, and the Lombard manner [...]. Like a bee from flowers, so did he draw from all the exquisite, and most perfect [...].²⁵⁹

The fragment, notably the use of the metaphor of the “bee” to describe Ludovico's assimilation of various models, echoes the prescriptions made up by Agostino Carracci in his sonnet. The apian metaphor, which was widely used by seventeenth-century critics like Malvasia,²⁶⁰ is a borrowing from Seneca's eighty-fourth letter to Lucilius, “On Gathering Ideas.”²⁶¹ Regardless of whether the sonnet in praise of Nicolò dell'Abate is a creation of Agostino Carracci or a fabrication of Malvasia, its content is yet another proof that an eclectic method was, as a matter of fact, a real issue for both artists and theorists in the Cinquecento and Seicento. In *Il clauastro di S. Michele in Bosco di Bologna*, Malvasia relates that Agostino warned his pupils against slavishly replicating the manners of great masters such as Raphael, Michelangelo and Correggio. Students were advised rather to carefully observe the manners of these Renaissance masters for the purpose of reworking and tailoring them to their own taste and style.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Id., *Il clauastro di S. Michele in Bosco* (Bologna: Pisarri, 1694), pp. 5-7: “Da tutti i migliori il meglio togliendo, si vidde con facilità non più usata, e gradita, formarne un breve compendio, anzi un prezioso estratto [...] ed accoppiando insieme, ed unendo con la giustezza di Raffaello la intelligenza di Michelangelo, ed a quest'anche aggiogendo col colorito di Tiziano l'Angelica purità del Correggio, venne di tutte queste maniere a formarne una sola, che alla Romana, alla Fiorentina, alla Veneziana, alla Lombarda, che invidiar [...]. Come ape da' fiori, così da tutti ando egli delibando lo squisito, e più perfetto [...].”

²⁶⁰ Malvasia, quoted in Anne Summerscale, *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci: Commentary and Translation* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), pp. 75, 304.

²⁶¹ Seneca, *Seneca in Ten Volumes: Ad Lucilium Epistulae morales*, trans. Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 277-281.

²⁶² Malvasia (1694), p. 30.

In the eyes of Romantic critics, the use of an eclectic method resulted in the weakening of artists' flair for a natural and instinctive artistic production. This is why, in one of his lectures delivered at the Royal Academy of London, professor of painting Henry Fuseli, who is credited with the introduction of the word "eclectic" into English (1801), expressed his disapproval of the eclectic doctrine taught by the Carracci.²⁶³ A similar viewpoint underlies Friedrich Schlegel and Franz Kugler's theories on art. The former, in his work *Sämmtliche Werke* published in 1823, is critical of "the learned imitators and eclectic painters of the school of the Carracci,"²⁶⁴ a remark which was to become somewhat influential in later scholarship.²⁶⁵ In the same vein, in his handbook on the history of painting first published in 1837, Franz Kugler dispraises the prescriptions in the sonnet attributed to Agostino Carracci by Malvasia.²⁶⁶

Bernard Berenson and John Shearman's profound dissatisfaction with Bachiacca's manner calls to mind Romantic critics' tendency to disregard the doctrine of eclecticism on account of their strong belief in the individual artistic genius. Berenson defined Bachiacca as a "small master" with "an uninventive brain" who relied on a "scissors-and-paste" method,²⁶⁷ while Shearman branded him as "a minor poet" and "an engaging parasite among the

²⁶³ Henry Fuseli, *Lectures on Painting, Delivered at the Royal Academy, March 1801* (London: J. Johnson, 1801), pp. 80 ff. Fuseli recalls the foundation in Bologna of "that eclectic school which by selecting the beauties, correcting the faults, supplying the defects and avoiding the extremes of the different styles, attempted to form a perfect system. But as the mechanic part was their only object, they did not perceive that the projected union was incompatible with the leading principle of each master." (p. 80). He also argues that "the heterogeneous principle of the eclectic school soon operated its own dissolution..." (p. 84).

²⁶⁴ Friedrich Schlegel, *Sämmtliche Werke*, 10 vols (Vienna: Mayer, 1823), vol. 6, p. 75.

²⁶⁵ Mahon (1971), p. 217. See also Lee (1951), p. 210.

²⁶⁶ Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1837), p. 333.

²⁶⁷ Bernard Berenson, *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, amplified ed., 3 vols (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938, 2nd edition, first published 1903), vol. 1, p. 297.

artists of the Florentine High Renaissance.”²⁶⁸ Both scholars’ scathing views of Bacciacca’s style also appear to be reminiscent of Vasari’s neglectful picture of the painter.²⁶⁹ Admittedly, Vasari heaps praise on Bacciacca by describing him as “a diligent painter, and particularly in painting little figures, which he executed to perfection, with much patience [...]” Bacciacca is also commended for being “an excellent painter in counterfeiting all the kinds of animals [...]”²⁷⁰ Yet these commendatory words hint at the second-rate status of Bacciacca, as he is regarded by Vasari as simply a painter of small figures and animals.

In spite of Romantic critics’ negative view of eclectic artists, scholars have long underscored the eclecticism of Vicentine Renaissance painters. Notwithstanding his refusal to regard Montagna as “eclectic,”²⁷¹ as argued by Paul Schubring, or as “an independent artist,”²⁷² to use Wilhelm Lübke and Max Semrau’s words, Aldo Foratti acknowledged that the young painter gathered “aesthetic ideas” from various artists.²⁷³ Montagna’s ability to absorb and assimilate artists’ pictorial idioms was also acknowledged by Crowe and Cavalcaselle. They underlined that in Montagna’s *Santa Maria in Vanzo Altarpiece* “the sternness and force of Mantegna are united to the dryness, sharpness, and bold balancing of primary tints familiar to Carpaccio” [Fig. 4].²⁷⁴ The abbot Luigi Lanzi was the first critic who stressed the multifarious style of Montagna’s pupil, Giovanni Buonconsiglio. The latter is described not only as the most modern and Bellinesque among Vicentine painters, but also as a

²⁶⁸ John Shearman, ‘A Manuscript Illustrated by Bacciacca,’ in *Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting in Honor of Millard Meiss*, eds Irving Lavin and John Plummer, 2 vols (New York: New York University Press, 1977), vol. 1, p. 399.

²⁶⁹ La France (2003), p. 237.

²⁷⁰ Vasari (1996), vol. 2, pp. 444-445.

²⁷¹ Paul Schubring, *Berlin I: das Kaiser Friedrich-Museum* (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1905), p. 157.

²⁷² Wilhelm Lübke and Max Semrau, *Die Kunst der Renaissance in Italien und im Norden* (Stuttgart: P. Neff, 1903), p. 223.

²⁷³ Aldo Foratti, *Bartolomeo Montagna* (Padua: Fratelli Drucker, 1908), p. 58.

²⁷⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1912), vol. 2, p. 128.

painter of *all'antica* friezes with tritons and other similar figures inspired by Padua's taste for the antique and Verona's ancient monuments.²⁷⁵ Vittorio Sgarbi has drawn attention to the "astonishing availability" which characterised Giovanni Buonconsiglio's openness to external inputs during the years 1484-1496, when he was still working in the Venetian mainland.²⁷⁶ Franco Barbieri has followed the same line, arguing that Montagna could have avoided his stylistic decline around 1510 by resorting to Buonconsiglio's "bold eclecticism." Barbieri has also stressed the "substantial eclectic availability" shown by Francesco Verla in his altarpiece of the *Mystical Marriage of St Catherine*, painted in 1512 for the church of San Francesco in Schio, near Vicenza [Fig. 102]. In this altarpiece Verla merged the Umbrian manner absorbed during his stay in central Italy with the stereometric treatment of the steps of the Virgin's throne and of the rug depicted in Buonconsiglio's *Turchini Altarpiece*, now in the Musei Civici of Vicenza [Fig. 103]. In addition, Verla was inspired by the monumentality of the figures in Montagna's *Certosa di Pavia Altarpiece* [Fig. 14].²⁷⁷ Elizabeth Carroll has recently emphasised Montagna's eclecticism by labelling his pictorial language as "a *mescolanza* of Venetian values of color and luminosity orchestrated by Paduan Squarcionesque-Mantegnesque heavy-handed *disegno*."²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Luigi Lanzi, *Storia pittorica della Italia dal Risorgimento delle belle arti fin presso al fine del XVIII secolo* (Milan: Per Nicolò Bettoni, 1831, first published 1795-1796), p. 266: "Sopra tutti i Vicentini di questa età è lodato Giovanni Bonconsigli detto il Marescalco; e certamente più s'appressa allo stile moderno e belliniano. L'uso però de' fregi con de' tritoni e con simili figure prese dall'antico, credo che lo derivasse piuttosto da Padova o da Verona, città finitime; l'una delle quali porgeva allora il gusto dell'antichità, l'altra i monumenti." See also Dal Pozzolo (1998), p. 14.

²⁷⁶ Vittorio Sgarbi, 'Le due culture di Giovanni Buonconsiglio,' *Bollettino d'arte* 65:7 (1980), p. 35: "Negli ultimi anni della formazione il Buonconsiglio non avrà trascurato di informarsi in più direzioni possibili con una veramente sconcertante disponibilità; prestandosi alle diverse esperienze [...]."

²⁷⁷ Barbieri (1982), pp. 49, 64.

²⁷⁸ Carroll (2006), pp. 4, 172. Carroll also argues that "artistically speaking, the visuality of Montagna's altarpieces stands testament to the fact that he was able to absorb a variety of styles holding currency in Venice and further afield in Padua, Vicenza and Verona." (p. 172).

These assertions endorse my idea of Montagna as an eclectic artist who incorporated artistic elements from various painters. He was clearly inspired by the styles, iconographies and compositional formulas of the leading artists working in Venice and the Venetian mainland, such as Giovanni Bellini, Alvise and Bartolomeo Vivarini, Andrea Mantegna, Antonello da Messina and the young Titian, as well as of Lombard painters, especially Bramante and Bergognone. I believe that Montagna's flair for the appropriation and accommodation of great artists' aesthetic ideas can be seen as a *modus operandi* that anticipates the Carracci's active response to the most relevant and suitable pictorial manners available. It goes without saying that Montagna was trained in a manner different from that practised by the pupils of the Carracci's Accademia degli Incamminati, who endeavoured to create the perfect work of art by combining Renaissance masters' good qualities. Indeed, in the Carracci's Accademia, students were taught how to free their judgement and, as a consequence, reach perfection both in artistic theory and practice.²⁷⁹

Vicentine painters' freedom to absorb and assimilate a *mescolanza* of artistic elements has been regarded as the result of the absence of a burdensome artistic tradition in Vicenza. For instance, Vittorio Sgarbi has argued that Giovanni Buonconsiglio's "strategic position, in the province" between 1484 and 1495-96, kept the painter immune from the weight of artistic tradition to which he would later be exposed in Venice. In Venice, again according to Sgarbi, Buonconsiglio's freedom to be open to and

²⁷⁹ Charles Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style* (Florence: Cadmo, 2000), p. 57.

experiment with new pictorial languages dwindled dramatically, owing to the presence of Giovanni Bellini and the legacy of Antonello da Messina.²⁸⁰

In a similar vein, Elizabeth Carroll has noted that Montagna was free to incorporate a variety of styles on account of the absence of a “definitive” school of painting in Vicenza.²⁸¹ In this respect, Barbieri has pointed out that a Vicentine school of painting was born around 1480, when a group of local and foreign artists painted several altarpieces for the side chapels of San Bartolomeo, and disappeared around 1520.²⁸² In other words, there was no artistic tradition in Vicenza until the late fifteenth century, when Montagna became the *caposcuola* of the Vicentine school of painting. Carroll’s standpoint is reminiscent of Jan Bialostocki and Enrico Castelnuovo’s theory that the lack of a burdensome artistic tradition typical of metropolitan centres enabled artists working in the periphery to be more responsive to impulses of any kind.²⁸³ In combining these impulses, Montagna managed to build them into a new “whole,” as argued by Ljubo Karaman with regards to artists’ creative handling of borrowed elements in peripheral areas.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ Sgarbi (1980), pp. 37, 42-43: “Il quale, a ben vedere, si trovava in quegli anni, e nel momento della sua maggiore intelligenza delle cose, in una posizione strategica, in provincia; libero quindi da pressioni dirette e non dialettiche, quali a Venezia, a chi non fosse Giorgione o Tiziano (e già di una quindicina d’anni più anziano di loro), imponeva la presenza del Bellini (e il ricordo di Antonello).” (p. 37); “Venezia, per il Buonconsiglio, significa un brusco ridimensionamento delle proprie forze autonome e della propria spinta sperimentale [...]. Si parla di sperimentalismo perché non può sorprendere, alla fin dei conti, che proprio durante il suo soggiorno veneziano il pittore senta l’esigenza di reagire a Venezia stessa producendo la pala di Cornedo, alla cui base stanno per noi, come si è visto, ben altri umori.” (pp. 42-43).

²⁸¹ Carroll (2006), p. 4.

²⁸² Barbieri (1982), p. 9.

²⁸³ Bialostocki (1989), pp. 46-47, 52. See also Cohen (1996), p. 7; and the introduction by Dario Gamboni in Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Symbolic Domination and Artistic Geography in Italian Art History,’ translated by Maylis Curie from French (‘Domination symbolique et géographie artistique dans l’histoire de l’art italien,’ *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 40 (1981)), *Art in Translation* 1:1 (2009), pp. 6-7.

²⁸⁴ Ljubo Karaman, *O djelovanju domaće sredine u umjetnosti hrvatskih krajeva. Problemi periferijske umjetnosti* (Zagreb: Društvo historičara umjetnosti Narodne Republike Hrvatske, 1963), p. 14. See also Bialostocki (1989), pp. 50-53.

Montagna's eclectic method stands out in the *Trento Altarpiece*, where according to Tancred Borenius, the three musical angels at the foot of the throne, the cross-vaulted ciborium and the hanging lamp have been inspired by Bellini's *St Catherine of Siena Altarpiece* [Figs 2, 8]. Borenius also argued that the Virgin and Child, and the figure of Saint Sebastian derive from Bellini's *St Job Altarpiece* [Fig. 52].²⁸⁵ Furthermore, according to Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, the Virgin and Child enthroned are a borrowing from Antonello da Messina's *San Cassiano Altarpiece*, while the figures in the predella betray a kinship with those depicted by Bellini in the predella of his *St Vincent Ferrer Altarpiece*, painted around 1464 for the Basilica of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice [Figs 9, 104-105].²⁸⁶

Montagna's eclecticism also resulted in the assimilation of non-Venetian artistic sources. One of the earliest attempts to isolate non-Venetian sources of inspiration in Montagna's style was made in the early nineteenth century by Luigi Lanzi,²⁸⁷ who has been given credit for pinning down Paduan as well as Bellinesque elements in the painter's manner.²⁸⁸ Similarly, Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle stressed the "muscular dryness" reminiscent of Dürer in Montagna's *Squarzi Altarpiece* and the Umbrian mood characterising his *San Giovanni Ilarione Altarpiece* [Figs 5, 21].²⁸⁹ Laura De Zuani has recently highlighted the presence of Paduan as well as Venetian elements in Montagna's early paintings of the Virgin and Child, in which he appropriated and combined Bellini's delicacy and Mantegna's stony treatment of the human

²⁸⁵ Borenius (1909), pp. 20, 169-170.

²⁸⁶ Villa in Lucco (2014), p. 315.

²⁸⁷ Lanzi (1968-1974), p. 37.

²⁸⁸ De Zuani (2015), pp. 5-6.

²⁸⁹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1912), vol. 2, pp. 126, 132.

figure.²⁹⁰ De Zuani has also identified both Venetian and non-Venetian models in Montagna's altarpiece of *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child with Sts Monica and Mary Magdalen* [Fig. 1]. The influence of Venetian art is manifest in the image of St Monica, which shows a marked similitude to Alvise Vivarini's *St Clare*, painted for the Venetian church of San Daniele and now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice [Fig. 106]. Another Venetian element is the meticulous depiction of rock formations, which might be indicative of Montagna's first-hand knowledge of Giovanni Bellini's *Transfiguration of Christ*, painted around 1478-79 for the cathedral of Vicenza [Fig. 38].²⁹¹ Nevertheless, according to De Zuani, Montagna might have developed a geological interest during a potential early trip to Padua, where he possibly marvelled at Mantegna's frescoes in the Ovetari Chapel in the church of the Eremitani and at Donatello's High Altar in the Santo. It is possible to imagine that Montagna was particularly struck by two frescoes in the Ovetari Chapel, the *Calling of Sts James and Andrew* and the *Execution of St James*, in which Mantegna's painstaking depiction of rock formations stands out [Figs 46-47]. Montagna's interest in rocky landscapes, again according to De Zuani, might also have stemmed from his knowledge of two paintings of *The Agony in the Garden*, executed by Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini in 1455 and 1459, respectively, and now in the National Gallery of London [Figs 107-108].²⁹² Moreover, it is worth calling attention to a *Pietà with Sts Mary Magdalen, John the Baptist and the Patron* now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza, which, according to Puppi, was probably painted in a Vicentine workshop between 1450 and 1460 [Fig. 109]. Puppi has hypothesised that the author of this painting might be a provincial artist who

²⁹⁰ De Zuani (2015), p. 29.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 67.

²⁹² Ibid., p. 21.

was familiar with the style of Francesco Squarcione's Paduan workshop.²⁹³ The almost archaeological treatment of nature, peculiar to Squarcionesque and Mantegnesque works of art, is noticeable in Montagna's *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child with Sts Monica and Mary Magdalen* [Fig. 1]. This work suggests that Montagna's geological interest might have sprung from a non-Venetian artistic *milieu*. It is thus likely that when Montagna first saw the accurate rendition of the rocky landscape in Bellini's *Transfiguration of Christ*, he was already acquainted with such a true-to-life depiction of nature. De Zuani's suggestion of Montagna's early trip to Padua invites us to consider the Veneto as a region of multiple centres of artistic production, each of which was characterised by a local artistic production that could fuel artists' imagination.

In the art of the *terraferma*, a comparable example of eclecticism deriving from the freedom of choice and openness to external inputs guaranteed by the absence of an encumbering Venetian artistic tradition is Giorgione's *Castelfranco Altarpiece* [Fig. 110]. The latter was commissioned in 1504 by the Sicilian condottiero Tuzio Costanzo for the cathedral of Castelfranco Veneto, near Treviso. The non-Venetian origins of the commissioner and the fact that the painting was destined for a church of the Venetian mainland might explain some unconventional elements in the work which we do not encounter in contemporary Venetian altarpieces showing the Virgin and Child enthroned with saints, or *sacre conversazioni*, such as Giovanni Bellini's *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, painted in 1505 [Fig. 111]. The elaborate fictive architecture and solemn monumentality of the figures in this altarpiece were first experimented by Bellini in his *St Catherine of Siena Altarpiece*, painted between 1474 and 1475 for the Venetian church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, and *St Job Altarpiece*, made

²⁹³ Puppi (1964), pp. 6-7.

around 1480 for the Venetian church of San Giobbe [Figs 8, 52]. The former functioned as an inescapable paradigm in Venice, as noticeable in Johannes Wilde's reconstruction of Antonello da Messina's altarpiece for the Venetian church of San Cassiano, made between 1475 and 1476 [Fig. 112]. On the contrary, in Giorgione's *Castelfranco Altarpiece* the intimate mood and humble demeanour of the figures, along with the peaceful landscape in the background, replace the dignified and statuesque saints and highly perspective chapel-like space of Bellini's and Antonello's works.²⁹⁴ Moreover, the numerous saints that crowd around the Virgin's throne in Bellini's and Antonello's works are in Giorgione's painting reduced to two, Nicasius and Francis. The unusually excessive height of the Virgin's throne has long been regarded by Roberto Longhi as the result of Giorgione's replacement of Bellini's perspective formula with the more elongated structure of the Umbrian and Emilian altarpieces of the late fifteenth century. In particular, Longhi was the first to hypothesise that Giorgione took inspiration from the pyramidal verticalism of Francesco Francia's *Scappi Altarpiece*, made around 1495, and Lorenzo Costa's *San Petronio Altarpiece*, painted in 1502 [Figs 113-114].²⁹⁵ This suggests that, in painting his altarpiece for the cathedral of his hometown of Castelfranco, a minor centre of the *terraferma*, Giorgione did not deem the well-established compositional formula developed in Venice by Bellini and

²⁹⁴ According to Francesco Valcanover, Giorgione's *Castelfranco Altarpiece*, particularly its intimacy and simplicity of the figures and landscape, differed from contemporary Venetian altarpieces, which repeated a traditional compositional formula developed in Venice during the second half of the fifteenth century according to the works by Piero della Francesca and Antonello da Messina. On this, see Francesco Valcanover, 'La pala di Castelfranco,' in *Giorgione e l'umanesimo veneziano* (1981), pp. 171-173, especially 171.

²⁹⁵ Longhi (1946), p. 20. See also Salvatore Settis, 'Giorgione in Sicilia. Sulla data e la composizione della pala di Castelfranco,' *Dialoghi di storia dell'arte* 7 (1998), pp. 30-55, especially 44-48.

Antonello binding.²⁹⁶ According to Salvatore Settis, the Venetian element which Giorgione merged with the pyramidal scheme of the *sacra conversazione* type in a vertical format is the landscape seen beyond a separatory curtain, characterising devotional paintings of doges, in a square and horizontal format, painted in Venice between the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento, such as Vincenzo Catena's *Loredan Altarpiece* and Giovanni Bellini's *Barbarigo Altarpiece* [Fig. 115].²⁹⁷ Giorgione's eclecticism is therefore comparable to Montagna's for the ways in which he deftly combined them both with Venetian and non-Venetian artistic elements. The *terraferma* functioned for Giorgione, as much as Montagna, as a place of experimentation and innovation, in which he felt unconstrained by the Venetian artistic tradition and free to handle it with enough leeway to create an unprecedented composition.

In conclusion, in this section I have reconstructed and analysed the origins and development of the concept of eclecticism in both artistic theory and practice. I have also shown that Montagna and other artists working in or for the *terraferma*, such as Giovanni Buonconsiglio and Giorgione, absorbed and reconfigured artistic elements of diverse origin in an original way through a decidedly eclectic method.

²⁹⁶ This aspect is discussed in Settis (1998), p. 44: "[...] inoltre, esso è l'unico e solo dipinto di Giorgione sicuramente destinato non a Venezia, ma a un paese della sua terraferma. All'una e all'altra caratteristica può ben aver corrisposto un qualche scarto di stile; come può ben essere che uno stesso pittore abbia adottato consapevolmente diversi registri stilistici a seconda delle circostanze della commissione e della collocazione dei suoi quadri."

²⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 48-49.

Variation and Invention

Variation and invention are two crucial aspects of Montagna's use of Venetian and non-Venetian prototypes. In his works Montagna proved to be capable of handling elements of diverse provenance in an original way by resorting to a receptive method which defied slavish imitation of mainstream models.

The distinctiveness of Montagna's style has long been argued. For instance, Aldo Foratti maintained that the painter "was not a slave to other formulas" and described him as "a vigorous artist who copies no one's manner."²⁹⁸ In the same years, Tancred Borenius pointed out that "it seems thus impossible essentially to trace the colouring back to any definite Venetian sources. It differs by its sound freshness from the metallic or parchment-like colouring of Bartolomeo Vivarini, as well as from the slippery, porcelain-like colouring which is so common with Alvise Vivarini. Montagna's colours show, on the other hand, no fusion and warmth recalling those of Giovanni Bellini."²⁹⁹ It should be added that Montagna imbued Giovanni Bellini's *sacre conversazioni* with greater monumentality, which is peculiar to both his imposing painted architecture and stony figures. The harsh rendering of the figures and draperies is a stylistic aspect which Montagna absorbed and reworked from Bartolomeo Vivarini. In the wake of Borenius, Lionello Puppi has argued that Montagna "recast Giovanni Bellini's breath of colour, Antonello da Messina's unifying light, and the northern harshness of Bartolomeo Vivarini in his own personal style" in his masterpieces of the 1480s and 1490s.³⁰⁰ On a similar note, Elizabeth Carroll has pointed out that "Montagna incorporated a *mescolanza* of

²⁹⁸ Foratti (1908), p. 35.

²⁹⁹ Borenius (1909), p. 31.

³⁰⁰ Puppi (1962), pp. 40-41.

styles characterized by a new sense of emotive realism, piety and monumentality” and that “it is critical to stress that Montagna was not a copyist, but a somewhat itinerant painter who assimilated a diverse grouping of techniques.”³⁰¹ Last but not least, Gabriele Neher has contended that Montagna “was never a slavish imitator,” as he developed “an original, distinctive manner of painting [...]” by drawing on the examples of Bramante and Leonardo, as well as on Venetian painting.³⁰²

What emerges from peering through this lens is Montagna’s capability of distinguishing his own style from that of his prototypes. Variation and invention are characteristic of several paintings by Montagna, such as the *Trento Altarpiece* [Fig. 2]. The marked similitude of this painting to Venetian models has long been underlined. Tancred Borenius, for instance, pointed out that the Virgin and Child, and Saint Sebastian, correspond closely with the same figures in Bellini’s *St Job Altarpiece*, while the three musical angels at the foot of the throne, the cross-vaulted ciborium and the hanging lamp are inspired by Bellini’s *St Catherine of Siena Altarpiece* [Figs 8, 52].³⁰³ Furthermore, according to Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, the Virgin and Child enthroned is a borrowing from Antonello da Messina’s *San Cassiano Altarpiece*, painted in 1475-1476 [Fig. 9].³⁰⁴ It is within the realms of possibility that Montagna saw Bellini’s and Antonello da Messina’s paintings during a potential trip to Venice made after his documented sojourn in the city in 1469.

Despite these borrowings, the figures in the *Trento Altarpiece* are arranged differently in the pictorial space, since they do not occupy the near foreground, as one sees in Bellini’s *St Catherine of Siena* and *St Job Altarpieces*. Montagna, on

³⁰¹ Carroll (2006), pp. 4, 78, 177.

³⁰² Neher (2007), p. 256.

³⁰³ Borenius (1909), pp. 20, 169-170.

³⁰⁴ Villa in Lucco (2014), p. 315.

the contrary, has depicted the saints between the foreground and the middleground, thereby intentionally rejecting Bellini's flat depiction of the figures lined up parallel to the picture plane. It appears that Montagna has not filled the foreground with figures so that the spectator's eye is driven to the centre of the composition, the Virgin and Child enthroned. With this layout, Montagna enables the onlooker to better appreciate the perspective illusion created by the diagonal lines of the marble floor. These lines, along which the saints have been placed, converge towards the Virgin's throne placed high above and recessed from its base, thus augmenting the impression of pictorial depth. The latter is also characteristic of Montagna's *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Nicholas of Bari and Lucy*, painted between 1480 and 1485 for the Vicentine church of Santa Maria dei Servi and now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art [Fig. 11]. Montagna first experimented with this figural arrangement in two altarpieces painted between 1475 and 1480, the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Ansanus, Anthony the Abbot, Jerome and Francis* now in the Musei Civici in Vicenza, and the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts George and Benedict* for the parish church of Sorio di Gambellara, near Vicenza [Figs 116-117]. However, since in these paintings the saints are pushed towards the front of the picture plane, the effect of spatial recession is inevitably reduced.

In light of this, George Kubler's idea that invention occurs whenever variation prevails over faithful copying³⁰⁵ enables us to gauge the extent to which Montagna departed from the known pattern in the *Trento Altarpiece* [Fig. 2]. Montagna's individual agency lies in the combination of the chapel-like architecture with cross vault of Bellini's *St Catherine of Siena Altarpiece* with, to some extent, the perspective figural arrangement of Antonello da Messina's

³⁰⁵ Kubler (1962), p. 72.

San Cassiano Altarpiece [Figs 8-9]. Yet Johannes Wilde's reconstruction of Antonello's *San Cassiano Altarpiece* shows that the figures occupied the foreground of the pictorial field, as in Bellini's altarpieces. Conversely, the figural group in the *Trento Altarpiece* has been more realistically accommodated well inside the fictive chapel-like space, and there seems to be a greater spaciousness in the saints' surroundings.

The assessment of a Bramantesque component in Montagna's paintings of the early 1490s provides yet another opportunity to illustrate his openness and active response to artistic otherness. A strong emphasis on foreshortened figures and a perspective representation of the pictorial space are Bramantesque elements which have been identified in Montagna's *Certosa di Pavia Altarpiece* [Fig. 14]. The same features are also present in Montagna's *Noli Me Tangere*, painted for the Vicentine church of San Lorenzo and now in Berlin [Fig. 7]. The painter's imaginative originality entails his setting the biblical event in a theatrical and illusionistic environment, which makes the work a *unicum* in northern Italian Renaissance painting. Montagna's compositional idea was later developed by Marco Basaiti in his *Christ Praying in the Garden*, painted in 1510 or 1516 for the Venetian church of San Giobbe [Fig. 118]. In particular, Basaiti's depiction of two monumental saints on both sides in the foreground, and of the narrative staged in a rocky landscape in the middleground and framed by architectural elements, is reminiscent of Montagna's compositional formula. The same may be argued with reference to Giovanni Bellini's altarpiece of *Ss Christopher, Jerome and Louis of Toulouse*, painted in 1513 for the Venetian church of San Giovanni Crisostomo [Fig. 119]. In light of this, it seems necessary to reconsider the artistic exchange between Montagna and Venetian artists as a

potentially two-directional relationship, as opposed to a one-directional relationship in which the latter influenced the former but not the reverse.

A comparable depiction of the theme is also found outside the Veneto, in Timoteo Viti's *Noli Me Tangere*, painted between 1512 and 1513 for the church of Sant'Angelo Minore in Cagli, a small town in the Marche [Fig. 120]. This work shows a similar use of architecture as a means of augmenting pictorial depth, as well as an analogous distribution of the figures. The archangel Michael and St Anthony the Abbot appear in the near foreground, while the protagonists, Christ and Mary Magdalen, stand in the middleground. Architectural ruins are depicted in between the foreground and middleground so as to link and frame the figures in the composition. In Montagna's painting, nonetheless, there is a bolder use of perspective and *trompe l'oeil*, notably in the depiction of John the Baptist's toes and Jerome's drapery folds, which seem to trespass on the viewer's space from the marble-like ledge. The highly foreshortened depiction of Christ's tomb in the background and of the rocky soil, along with the fictive arches in the foreground, are no less striking than the sharp and monumental rendering of the figures [Fig. 7].

Montagna's variation on the subject is also evident when compared with other northern Italian versions, such as Titian's and Pordenone's *Noli Me Tangere* in the National Gallery of London and the Museo of the Duomo of Cividale del Friuli, respectively [Figs 121-122]. In both paintings, the narrative takes place in a landscape which functions simply as a foil to Christ and Mary Magdalen, whose primary role results from their position in the foreground and, in Titian's work, from the absence of further figures. In its own right, Montagna's *Noli Me Tangere* broke new ground in the handling of the subject. If the theme had traditionally been represented in a naturalistic setting, as in

Giotto's fresco in the Scrovegni Chapel, Montagna depicted the narrative in an unusually exaggerated architectural and archaeological setting [Figs 7, 123]. This allowed the artist to incorporate the naturalistic setting into a composition marked by strong perspective illusion and a meticulous architectural definition of the pictorial space, which are both typical of late fifteenth-century painting. In the end, despite Montagna's desire to experiment with new formulas, in his painting geometric abstraction would prevail over the more modern naturalistic approach developed by Titian and others in the early years of the sixteenth century.

A comparison with Titian is also useful to highlight Montagna's variation and invention. As noted earlier, in the *Santa Maria in Vanzo Altarpiece* Montagna combined his sharpness and dryness of form with a Titianesque handling of colour and swelling monumentality of the figures, while not reprising Titian's free mode of composition [Fig. 4]. Montagna's only partial appropriation of his model should be looked upon as a conscious choice aimed to avoid indiscriminate absorption of a source in its entirety. The *Santa Maria in Vanzo Altarpiece* is not the only work which attests that Titian's work did not always function as an inescapable paradigm to be closely imitated. Lotto's altarpiece for the Venetian church of San Giacomo dell'Orio, commissioned in 1546, has been described as an outdated composition due to its flat and simplified pictorial space, which is in stark contrast to the modernity of contemporary paintings made by Titian and Tintoretto in Venice [Fig. 124].³⁰⁶ In addition, Lotto's depiction of the Christ Child laid across the lap of the praying Virgin might be a borrowing from works seen in provincial centres of the Marche. It has indeed been proposed that Lotto might have taken the motif from a fresco,

³⁰⁶ David Frapiccini, 'Lorenzo Lotto e gli strumenti del mestiere: la periferia come consapevole scelta strategica,' *Il capitale culturale* 10 (2014), pp. 252-253.

attributed to his pupil Giulio Vergari, in the church of Santi Tommaso e Barnaba in the Marchigian town of San Ginesio [Fig. 125]. In the fresco, as in other contemporary works painted in the region, the image of the baby Jesus' body laid across the lap of the prayerful Virgin is thought to derive from the numerous *Vesperbilder* which largely circulated at the time in central Italy, including San Ginesio.³⁰⁷ Hence, if Montagna's *Santa Maria in Vanzo Altarpiece* is partly modelled on Titian's work, Lotto's altarpiece for San Giacomo dell'Orio retains nothing of Titian's modernity, despite being made for a Venetian church at a time when the novelty of Titian's altarpieces had long taken hold in Venice. A comparison between Lotto's altarpiece and Titian's *Pesaro Altarpiece*, painted between 1519 and 1526 for Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice [Fig. 126], also highlights Lotto's critically independent choice. The open and diagonal composition created by Titian through the asymmetrical arrangement of the Virgin, an effect which is also found in earlier works such as Sebastiano del Piombo's *San Giovanni Crisostomo Altarpiece* (c. 1510-1511), is at odds with the iconic and symmetrical depiction of the figures in Lotto's painting. The latter shows that Lotto preferred the centralised space of the late fifteenth-century *sacra conversazione* type over Sebastiano del Piombo's and Titian's acentral perspective compositions, which marked a turning point in Venetian art. The same simplified composition is found in Lotto's *Assumption of the Virgin* for San Francesco alle Scale in Ancona, painted around 1549 [Fig. 127]. It has been noted that the painting differs from Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin*, made in 1516-1518 for Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice, as it is divided in two rather than three tiers, and its iconic rendition of space is at variance with Titian's more elaborate definition of the picture

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 254.

field through the skillful use of light and colour [Fig. 128]. It has also been pointed out that such a difference is indicative of Lotto's decision to model his *Ancona Assumption* on that previously made for Celana, in the province of Bergamo, and on those painted in the Venetian and Lombard mainland rather than on Titian's *Frari Assumption*.³⁰⁸ Lotto's conscious departure from Titian is blatant when contrasting his *Ancona Assumption* with the Brescian Giovanni Gerolamo Savoldo's painting for the high altar of the church of San Domenico in Pesaro, in the north of the Marches [Fig. 129]. The altarpiece, painted in 1524-1526, presents the same simplification based on the division of the composition in two tiers. Therefore, Lotto discarded Titian's compositional strategy for more simplified versions created in minor provincial centres of the Venetian Republic and beyond.

Montagna's original handling of models may recall a procedure described by Stephen J. Campbell and Stephen Milner with regards to Giovanni di Paolo's Sienese version of Gentile da Fabriano's *Adoration of the Magi* now in the Uffizi in Florence [Figs 130-131]. In discussing this procedure, Campbell and Milner have stressed that the use of the word "translation" is more appropriate than the terms "copy" or "imitation."³⁰⁹ In my view, the word "translation" perfectly fits the reconfiguration of Mantegnesque and Bellinesque prototypes in Montagna's *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple with Donor*, made for the Aurifici chapel in San Bartolomeo in Vicenza [Fig. 3]. Carlo Alberto Bucci has proposed that the versions of the same subject executed by Mantegna, painted around 1455 and now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, and

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 261.

³⁰⁹ Stephen J. Campbell and Stephen Milner, 'Introduction: Art, Identity and Cultural Translation in Renaissance Italy,' in *Artistic Exchange and Cultural Translation in the Italian Renaissance City*, eds Stephen J. Campbell and Stephen J. Milner (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 5.

by Giovanni Bellini, painted between 1465 and 1470 and now in the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice, functioned as models for Montagna's painting [Figs 132-133].³¹⁰ It is indeed possible that Montagna had access to these paintings, either directly or through copies or preparatory drawings, as suggested by the relief-like rigidity of Mantegna's and Bellini's half-length pictures that he has retained. On a stylistic level, Montagna recast the figures painted by Mantegna and Bellini in his own pictorial manner, notably in his sharp rendering of heads and draperies. On a compositional level, the frieze-like arrangement of the figures is a Mantegnesque/Bellinesque formula. Nevertheless, some figures in Mantegna's and Bellini's works are shown frontally or in three-quarter profile, while in Montagna's *Presentation*, where the characters are reduced to the essential, they are all depicted in profile. Furthermore, if in Mantegna's and Bellini's versions the figures are depicted half-length and close-up, Montagna has exploited the larger format of the altarpiece to show them in full-length and in a kneeling position, and place them in the middleground rather than the foreground of the composition. Thus, the resemblance of Montagna's work to these prototypes is only partial, as the painter has discarded the close-up and half-length depiction of the figures, whose stiffness he has increased in his full-length narrative. Last but not least, the Mantegnesque and Bellinesque close-up is at variance with the marked sense of spatial recession accomplished by Montagna through a

³¹⁰ Carlo Alberto Bucci, 'La *Presentazione al Tempio* di Bartolomeo Montagna per Girolamo Aurifici,' *Venezia Cinquecento: studi di storia dell'arte e della cultura* 3:5 (1993), p. 46. The original location of these works is unknown, although Marcantonio Michiel, in his list of works seen in 1530 in the house of cardinal Pietro Bembo in Padua, wrote that "The picture on panel, which represents Our Lady holding the Child for Circumcision, with half-length figures, is by Mantegna." This panel is thought to be Mantegna's *Presentation* now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. On this, see Michiel (1903), pp. 21-22; Babet Trevisan in *Giovanni Bellini* (2008), p. 176; Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli, *Giovanni Bellini e la pittura veneta a Berlino: le collezioni di James Simon e Edward Solly alla Gemäldegalerie* (Verona: Scripta, 2015), p. 318.

meticulous depiction of the multi-levelled marble-like podium, which links the foreground to the middleground.

A departure from Mantegna's and Bellini's close-up and half-length depictions of the *Presentation* is also found in Carpaccio's altarpiece of the same subject, painted for the Venetian church of San Giobbe in 1510 [Fig. 134]. In this painting, all the figures are full-length and stand on a high marble-like podium in full or three-quarter profile. Montagna's *Presentation* closely resembles Carpaccio's idea of staging the narrative in a fictive chapel in which the figures are seen full-length on a marble-like podium and recessed to the middleground of the picture field. In light of this, I believe that Montagna might have studied Carpaccio's work in San Giobbe, where the painting was displayed side by side with Bellini's *St Job Altarpiece*, which had previously served as a source of inspiration for his *Trento Altarpiece* [Figs 2, 52]. Unlike Carpaccio, who painted figures associated with the evangelical scene only, Montagna included the commissioner Girolamo Aurifici. The artist's choice is reminiscent of Bellini's *Presentation*, in which the two youths in the right corner look like contemporary figures, one of them being at times identified as the artist's self-portrait [Fig. 133]. Moreover, if Carpaccio painted an altar behind the figures, Montagna depicted an ark, which Carlo Alberto Bucci has hailed as an allusion to the *monumentum lapideum* erected by Girolamo Aurifici in his family chapel according to his father Giampietro's will.³¹¹ Montagna's reconfiguration of a repeated Bellinesque format and of Carpaccio's painting testifies to his active response to *exempla* percolating from Venice.

In Montagna's *Presentation*, the figures are depicted in a chapel-like space which visually links the altarpiece with the architecture of the chapel [Fig. 3].

³¹¹ Bucci (1993), p. 49.

The linkage of the painted architecture with the architecture of the chapel had already been exploited by Giovanni Bellini in the *St Job* and *San Zaccaria Altarpieces* [Figs 52, 111]. In both paintings, Bellini depicted a *sacra conversazione* in which the saints, seen in full or three-quarter profile, either look out to the beholder or are turned to the Virgin and Child enthroned. Since the Virgin is shown frontally and gazes at the spectator in a pensive attitude, she seems to be totally unaware of the presence of the saints around her throne. There is no narrative connection among the figures, and the saints are simply bystanders. By contrast, the iconographic type of the *Presentation* is a narrative subject that calls for interaction among the figures, especially for the gesture of the Virgin who presents the Christ Child to Simeon. More importantly, since this narrative takes place in a temple, Montagna was able to reframe the church-like space in which the figures in Bellini's *sacre conversazioni* are usually depicted. Montagna's *Presentation* thus stems from a creative combination of the almost iconic treatment of the narrative subject characteristic of the half-length and close-up image with the perspective illusion of a chapel-like space intended to establish a visual link with the chapel. The narrative, however, is fainter than that staged in Mantegna's and Bellini's *Presentations*, owing to the increased frozenness of the figures, which have all been depicted in full profile [Figs 132-133]. The emphasised stiffness of Montagna's figures emerges from a comparison with Carpaccio's *Presentation* [Fig. 134]. The depiction of some of the figures in three-quarter profile enabled Carpaccio to eschew an excessively iconic rendering of the narrative subject, which the rigidity of all the figures seen in full profile conveys.

In conclusion, Montagna's response to Venetian and non-Venetian

models is not a sign of slavish imitation; on the contrary, it is the product of imitative inventiveness aimed at appropriating and reworking artistic impulses from diverse sources. In addition, I contend that Montagna's original handling of borrowed elements hinged on a critical exercise of judgement and choice which enabled him to explore, adapt and vary compositional formulas and pictorial manners according to necessity.

Commissioners' Aesthetic Needs and Taste

In this section I shall show the extent to which artists' original response to artistic otherness, especially Montagna's, could be influenced by the aesthetic needs and taste of commissioners operating in or linked with minor centres of the Italian peninsula. The influence of Renaissance commissioners operating in outlying regions has been highlighted by Nicos Hadjinicolaou in his description of the decorative plan of the library of Siena cathedral, commissioned by Cardinal Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In Hadjinicolaou's opinion, the deployment of *grottesche*, or *all'antica* motifs particularly common in Rome at the time, is indicative of Siena's ambition to rival Rome in terms of historical dignity, and of the competitive attitude of Cardinal Piccolomini.³¹² Tom Henry followed the same line in his investigation of Guillaume de Marcillat's activity in the cathedral of Arezzo during the first half of the sixteenth century. In particular, he has argued that one way to prove the values of what is considered artistic periphery is to show that local patrons' choices were aimed at promoting

³¹² Nicos Hadjinicolaou, 'Kunstzentren und periphere Kunst,' *Kritische berichte* 11 (1983), pp. 36-56.

innovation in the art of provincial areas. Between the 1510s and 1520s, the patrons of Arezzo decided to replace Domenico Pecori's and Stagio Sassoli's stained glass windows in the city cathedral with those designed and executed by Guillaume de Marcillat. In hiring Marcillat, an artist of renown who had become familiar with the modern style when working for Pope Leo X in the Vatican Palace, the Aretine patrons ensured that artistic novelty shaped the decoration of the cathedral walls. The gist of Henry's account is that, through their modernisation of taste, the Aretine patrons longed to vie with papal patronage, notably with the decorative project of the Vatican Palace.³¹³ Hadjinicolaou and Henry have therefore questioned the authority of the centre-periphery model of Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg, according to which, unlike the centre, "the periphery tends to emerge (though not always) as a place of delayed development."³¹⁴ However, Hadjinicolaou and Henry are not the only scholars who have stressed the importance of patronage in provincial areas. Alessandro Nova has more recently emphasised the discerning taste of the Benedictine monks of Monte Cassino who commissioned Girolamo Romanino's *Santa Giustina Altarpiece* for the church of Santa Giustina in Padua [Fig. 135]. According to Nova, when the monks tasked Romanino with painting the altarpiece in 1513, they were certainly aware of the striking frescoes executed in 1511 by Titian in the Scuola del Santo, located not far from Santa Giustina [Figs 31-33]. The monks' decision not to hire Titian has been appropriately hailed by Nova as a critically independent choice, witnessed also by the fifteenth-century *sacra conversazione*

³¹³ Tom Henry, "Centro e Periferia": Guillaume de Marcillat and the Modernisation of Taste in the Cathedral of Arezzo,' *Artibus et Historiae* 15:29 (1994), pp. 57, 62.

³¹⁴ Castelnuovo and Ginzburg (1979), pp. 48-49.

type characterising Romanino's work.³¹⁵ The monks were probably responsible for the choice of this traditional iconography, which appears considerably less innovative than that of Titian's altarpiece of *St Mark Enthroned*, painted around 1510-1511 for the Venetian church of Santo Spirito in Isola [Fig. 136].³¹⁶ By the same token, Beverley Lyle has underscored that both conservative and modern stylistic choices were made deliberately by local artists and patrons, and varied according to the commission.³¹⁷ Lyle has challenged Castelnovo and Ginzburg's idea of an overly standardised art produced in Cinquecento Umbria, which the two scholars endeavoured to prove by listing a number of Umbrian copies of Ghirlandaio's *Coronation of the Virgin Mary* [Fig. 137]. This altarpiece, painted in 1486 in the master's Florentine workshop, was sent to the church of the Franciscan convent of San Girolamo near Narni, a small town in Umbria. In support of their dismissive evaluation of sixteenth-century Umbrian art, Castelnovo and Ginzburg have lamented that Ghirlandaio's altarpiece was slavishly copied for several other Franciscan establishments in Todi, Trevi and Norcia.³¹⁸ Conversely, Lyle has emphasised the subtle message lurking behind one of these similar, albeit not identical Umbrian versions of Ghirlandaio's altarpiece, Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni's *Coronation of the Virgin Mary*, initially commissioned from Raphael by the nuns of Monteluca [Fig. 138]. If it is true that the nuns wished Raphael's painting to resemble Ghirlandaio's altarpiece in colour and proportions, a higher number of figures are depicted in Raphael's work, an aspect which Lyle deems

³¹⁵ Alessandro Nova, 'Centro, periferia, provincia: Tiziano e Romanino,' in *Romanino: un pittore in rivolta nel Rinascimento italiano* (exhibition catalogue, Trento, Castello del Buonconsiglio, 29 July 2006 - 29 October 2006), eds Lia Camerlengo and Ezio Chini (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana, 2006), p. 51.

³¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 51-52.

³¹⁷ Lyle (2008), p. 32.

³¹⁸ Castelnovo and Ginzburg (1979), p. 317.

sufficient to dispute Castelfnuovo and Ginzburg's denial of Umbrian patrons' discerning taste. In her opinion, it was also the Umbrian Franciscans' desire for these paintings to enter into a visual continuum with one another that justified their close resemblance to Ghirlandaio's prototype. Furthermore, Lyle has substantiated her reappraisal of Umbrian Renaissance art by calling attention to Stephen J. Campbell and Stephen Milner's study on cultural translation and artistic exchange in Renaissance Italy.³¹⁹ Notably, she has called attention to Campbell's discussion on the peripheral recipient's "selective assimilation and modification of both artistic practices and forms in line with local considerations."³²⁰ It is therefore critical to consider each work as a "local manifestation," as argued also by Charles Cohen. In challenging Bernard Berenson's Venice-oriented criticism of Pordenone's career, Cohen has suggested that works of art need to be assessed in light of multiple factors, such as "patronage, culture, iconography, and style", of the context in which they have been executed.³²¹

Did Montagna work for critically independent commissioners? In order to answer this question, it is essential to reflect on Giovanni Battista Trento's decision to commission an altarpiece from Montagna in 1484 for his family chapel in San Bartolomeo in Vicenza [Fig. 2]. Given the prestige of the commission, and the fact that the altarpiece stood on the high altar of one of the most important churches in the city, it may be surprising that the canon did not hire a renowned foreign painter, as Gaspare Trissino did a few years earlier. Trissino tasked Giovanni Bellini with painting a *Transfiguration of Christ* between 1478 and 1479 for his chapel dedicated to Santi Simone e Giuda in the city

³¹⁹ Lyle (2008), pp. 29, 33, 35.

³²⁰ Stephen J. Campbell, 'Regional Identities and the Encounter with Florence,' in *Artistic Exchange and Cultural Translation in the Italian Renaissance City* (2004), p. 135.

³²¹ Cohen (1996), pp. 5-6.

cathedral, and the modernity of the altarpiece is likely to have had a decided influence on the local artistic *milieu* [Fig. 38].³²² Yet it should be taken into account that Giovanni Battista Trento may have wished to hire Montagna because he was the most prominent representative of the Vicentine school of painting, for which he laid the foundations by running the main workshop in Vicenza.³²³ This leading role made him a highly sought-after painter in the city between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Indeed, before being hired by Trento, around 1485 Montagna was entrusted by Piera Porto Pagello, who belonged to a Vicentine family of high descent, with the task of painting *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child with Sts Monica and Mary Magdalen* for her family chapel in the same church [Fig. 1].

Another altarpiece which evidences the critical independence of Montagna's Vicentine commissioners is the *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple with Donor*, painted between 1515 and 1520 for the church of San Bartolomeo in Vicenza [Fig. 3]. The painting was commissioned by Girolamo Aurifici, whose family belonged to the lowest ranks of the Vicentine patriciate and probably made its fortune in goldsmithery.³²⁴ In the altarpiece, the Virgin Mary is portrayed in the act of presenting Jesus to Simeon the Prophet in the Temple of Jerusalem in the presence of St Joseph, who is depicted behind Mary, and of the commissioner Aurifici, painted behind Simeon.³²⁵

The narrative takes place in a chapel-like space in which, according to Carlo Alberto Bucci, the unusual accommodation of the figures, squashed in a

³²² On this commission, see Magrini (1863), p. 43; De Zuani (2015), pp. 39-40.

³²³ Puppi (1962), p. 21. For further reference to the Vicentine school of painting, see also Barbieri (1982), p. 9; Carroll (2006), p. 4; Neher (2007), pp. 254-258.

³²⁴ Bucci (1993), p. 42.

³²⁵ For a description of the altarpiece, see Marco Boschini, *I gioielli pittoreschi. Virtuoso ornamento della città di Vicenza; cioè l'endice di tutte le pitture pubbliche della stessa città* (Venice: Francesco Nicolini, 1676), pp. 90-91.

kneeling position in the middleground of Montagna's *Presentation*, is indicative of the intention of the painter and, above all, his commissioner not to obstruct the view of the ark in the middleground, the focus of the composition.³²⁶ The centrality of the ark is stressed by the Christ Child depicted on its central axis. The Christ Child's body presented by the Virgin hints at his role as redeemer of mankind's original sin and saviour of human souls, especially Aurifici's. In addition, the redemptive function of the Christ Child's body recalls its sacrificial death for the salvation of humanity, celebrated during the eucharistic rite that took place on the altar above which Montagna's altarpiece was installed. The ark, as noted earlier, is to Bucci an allusion to the family funerary tomb built by Girolamo Aurifici in his chapel so as to fulfil a request made by his father Giampietro in his will, drawn up on 3 August 1492.³²⁷ Bucci has also mentioned Girolamo's will, drafted on 26 March 1528, which refers to his father's demand for a family *monumentum lapideum* to be built in their chapel in San Bartolomeo.³²⁸ Notwithstanding the lack of further references to the Aurifici's *monumentum lapideum* in later descriptions of the church, I concur with Bucci's idea that the centrality of the ark in Montagna's painting needs to be linked with Girolamo Aurifici's possible wish to emphasise its association with the real funerary monument in the chapel. It may therefore be argued that Montagna and Girolamo Aurifici were guided mainly by visual concerns related to the function attached to the painting. These concerns led them to discard the close-up and half-length figure narrative of Mantegna's and Bellini's *Presentations* [Figs 132-133]. This compositional formula was a means of inspiring devotion and meditation in the private sphere, for which Mantegna's

³²⁶ Bucci (1993), p. 49.

³²⁷ ASVi, *Uffizio del Registro, Testamenti in Bombacina* (3 August 1492), cited in Bucci (1993), p. 51.

³²⁸ ASVi, *Uffizio del Registro, Testamenti in Bombacina* (26 March 1528), cited in Bucci (1993), p. 51.

and Bellini's paintings were probably intended. According to Sixten Ringbom, the close-up and half-length image provided the holy figures depicted with the "immediacy" and "nearness" sought by the devotee during domestic devotional exercises.³²⁹ The dark background in Mantegna's and Bellini's paintings is yet another compositional device aimed at stressing the presence of the figures depicted in the near foreground, thus eliciting the faithful's immediate response. This device was at odds with Mantegna's idea of setting a multi-figural composition in a chapel-like space in order for the altarpiece to enter into a visual continuum with the architecture of the chapel. Moreover, Mantegna and Bellini's close-up and half-length image, which enhanced the physical presence and nearness of the figures in the near foreground, could not fulfil Aurifici's desire to make the ark the focus of the composition in the middleground.

A similar case in which a painter is likely to have altered a Venetian traditional compositional formula due to the commissioner's will to stress the funerary connotation of and connection between altarpiece and chapel is the commission of Giorgione's *Castelfranco Altarpiece* [Fig. 110]. According to Salvatore Settis, Giorgione broke with the traditional layout of the Venetian *sacra conversazione* type, in which the throne is usually lower and the Virgin and Child stare either at one of the saints around them or out of the painting. Alternatively, the Virgin stares at the Christ Child, who in turn looks at one of the saints, the musical angels seated at the foot of the throne or the donor. Giorgione's depiction of a very high Virgin's throne and of the Virgin and Child gazing downward towards the Costanzo's sarcophagus stems to Settis from the commissioner's will to highlight the funerary connotation of the work

³²⁹ Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-Up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1984, 2nd edition, first published 1965), p. 48.

through the inclusion of the tomb.³³⁰ Settis has substantiated his argument by calling attention to an anonymous article, published in 1803, which contains the most accurate description of Giorgione's work and makes it clear that it was commissioned by the *condottiere* Tuzio Costanzo for his family chapel after the death of his son Matteo.³³¹ The article, as noted by Settis, enables to link the painting with the tomb of Matteo Costanzo, placed on a wall of the Costanzo chapel. If the article does not mention the tomb, it relates that the painted sarcophagus bears the coat of arms of the noble Costanzo family, which is also carved on Matteo's funerary slab [Fig. 139]. In addition, it stresses that the painter attempted to ease the pain suffered by Tuzio for the loss of his son by depicting the Virgin's throne raised high above a sarcophagus carved in porphyry, and by directing to this the rueful gaze of both the Virgin and Christ Child. In light of this, Settis has concluded that Giorgione broke with the traditional scheme of the *sacra conversazione* to comply with the commissioner's desire to commemorate his son's demise.³³² This statement calls for some observations on the complex collaboration between artist and commissioner during the commissioning and creative processes. If, as argued by Charles Hope, contracts for altarpieces normally show the patron concerned about indicating the saints and their position around the Virgin, the painter was free to choose "the setting, the gestures, and the decorative details."³³³ For instance, in his account book Lorenzo Lotto recorded on 27 August 1546 that he had been commissioned to paint an altarpiece for San Giacomo dell'Orio in

³³⁰ Settis (1998), pp. 40-41.

³³¹ Anonymous, 'Un'antica descrizione della Pala di Castelfranco,' *Il Quotidiano Veneto* 264 (2 December 1803), pp. 1067-1068; Settis (1998), pp. 33-34, 54-55.

³³² Settis (1998), p. 40.

³³³ Charles Hope, 'Altarpieces and the Requirements of Patrons,' in *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, eds Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990), pp. 535-571, especially 541.

Venice, which should have included the Virgin and Child with Sts James, Andrew, Cosmas and Damian, and two angels in exchange for twenty ducats [Fig. 124].³³⁴ Yet Salvatore Settis has pointed out that the commissioner could give the artist further instructions on important details, such as those likely given by Tuzio Costanzo to Giorgione on the sarcophagus depicted under the Virgin's throne. Settis has also maintained that Giorgione, regardless of whether he followed written or verbal instructions, had to devise his composition according to the consequences of his employer's demand for the painting to be displayed in his family chapel. Such consequences are the relationship between the altarpiece and the architecture and decorative details of the chapel, or its lighting conditions.³³⁵ In planning the general layout of the altarpiece, Giorgione, again according to Settis, had to find a way to fit the sarcophagus into his work in line with Tuzio's instruction, and he did so by creating an original composition characterised by two elements of novelty: the very high throne of the Virgin and the gaze of the Virgin and Christ Child directed downward towards the coat of arms of the sarcophagus below them.³³⁶ Therefore, if the artist needs to be credited with creating an original composition, his originality derives in the first place from the circumstances of the commission and aesthetic demands of the commissioner. In other words, to paraphrase Settis, it is the commissioner who promoted the creation of a painting and chose the subject and message to convey, while the painter was responsible for the creation of the painting and development of its message.³³⁷

The same can be argued with regards to Montagna's *Presentation* and Lotto's

³³⁴ Lorenzo Lotto, *Il "Libro di spese diverse": con aggiunta di lettere e d'altri documenti*, ed. Pietro Zampetti (Venice; Rome: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1969), p. 36.

³³⁵ Settis (1998), p. 47; Id., *Artisti e committenti fra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2010), p. 190.

³³⁶ Settis (1998), p. 47; Id. (2010), pp. 190-191.

³³⁷ Settis (1981), p. 375.

altarpiece for San Giacomo dell'Orio in Venice [Figs 3, 124]. In the case of the former, destination, funerary connotation and association with the Aurifici *monumentum lapideum* certainly provided the artist with the necessary input to devise an unprecedented work. Similarly, it has been pointed out that the outdated layout of Lotto's picture, as well as the baby Jesus' body laid across the lap of the prayerful Virgin, typical of northern depictions of the *Vesperbild*, derives from the commissioners' close link to the Appennine area of the Marches. Indeed, among the members of the Scuola della Concezione who commissioned the painting, were *cassoni* painters, carvers, tanners, weavers, dyers and cloth merchants, who were usually in contact with Marchigian Appennine towns, such as Camerino, Sanseverino and San Ginesio, where fabrics were produced and traded.³³⁸ In particular, on 27 August 1546 Lotto annotated in his account book that one of the members of the Scuola who agreed the terms of the contract for the altarpiece with him was the cloth weaver Francesco de Zuane.³³⁹ It has therefore been suggested that the commissioners' acquaintance with the Appennine area of the Marches, where the northern motif of the Christ Child laid across the lap of the praying Virgin was used by local artists to whom Lotto could have turned for inspiration, might have influenced Lotto's creation of an archaic composition.³⁴⁰ The latter, as noted earlier, was rather unusual for a Venetian church altarpiece in that it was at variance with the modernity of Titian's altarpieces, such as his *Pesaro Altarpiece* for the Frari [Fig. 126].

In conclusion, in this section I have stressed the importance of the role played by commissioners operating in minor centres of the *terraferma*, especially

³³⁸ Frapiccini (2014), p. 254.

³³⁹ Lotto (1969), p. 36.

³⁴⁰ Frapiccini (2014), pp. 253-254.

the ways in which their aesthetic demands may have influenced the artist's original approach to artistic tradition. Montagna's and Giorgione's variations on traditional pictorial schemes percolating from Venice stem not only from their creativity, but also from the instructions they may have received from their commissioners, who were driven by their own and their family's aesthetic needs and taste. This does not undermine the painters' inventiveness, but rather makes it even more remarkable, as they were confronted with the challenge of breaking with traditional ways of depicting a subject in order to cater to their commissioners' expectations.

CHAPTER TWO

MONTAGNA AS A DEVOTIONAL PAINTER

Chapter Two is concerned with Montagna as a devotional painter and is divided into six sections. In Section One I discuss the obstacles to our complete understanding of private devotional paintings, such as their sometimes critical state of preservation and the scarcity of documentation on their buyers, destination and prices. In addition, some of these paintings have not yet been examined with the aid of scientific methods that allow sophisticated types of visual analysis (eg. infrared reflectography). In Section Two, I reconstruct the religious and socioeconomic context in which the production of paintings for private devotion in Montagna's workshop needs to be placed. The wide diffusion of the cult of the Virgin Mary, the rise of a new form of spirituality experienced more directly in the private sphere, and the conspicuous consumption in early modern Italy are the foci of this section. In Section Three, I pinpoint the iconographic and stylistic expedients used by devotional painters such as Montagna, Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano to enhance their works' appeal and the faithful's mystical experience during prayer in the private sphere. In particular, I highlight devotional aids in Virgin and Child paintings, such as the praying hands of the Virgin and the naked body of the infant Christ, which stand testament to devotional painters' response to a more privatised and internalised spirituality. Section Four opens up new vistas on the serial production of private devotional paintings in Montagna's workshop. I analyse the graphic and painterly techniques of Virgin and Child paintings, as well as workshop methods of customisation and de-personalisation of these works according to

the art market demand. Sections Five and Six look at private devotional paintings made for the ready-made sector and on commission, respectively. More to the point, I provide examples of paintings ascribed to Montagna or his workshop likely destined for the open market, as their faithful repetition of their prototypes' design suggests, and of potentially commissioned works which show signs of customisation, such as the inclusion of saints in the composition.

2.1 Practical and Methodological Concerns in Studies on the Workshop

Production of Private Devotional Paintings

This section is concerned mainly with the identification of the practical and methodological issues which scholars have to grapple with when working on the workshop production of Renaissance paintings for domestic devotion. One of the main obstacles to a deep understanding of private devotional paintings is the fact that catalogue entries, where the majority of information on these works can be found, do not help convey an overall view of Montagna's contribution to this genre. In these entries scholars usually seek to assign a date to the painting, clarify its authorship, report restoration works and describe the artist's technique. Apart from this, devotion and spectatorship are at the core of scholars' investigations into works, usually altarpieces, commissioned for churches, convents and confraternities. Scholars have drawn on the large amount of information on these altarpieces and exploited the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of them in museums.¹

There has been a tendency to consider private worship as a characteristic of Protestant countries located north of the Alps, although recent studies on Duecento and Trecento works made in Florentine workshops have proven that panel paintings were intended for domestic use.² Piety in Renaissance Italy, by contrast, has been discussed mainly in relation to public sites of religious experience.³ In addition, there are several studies that look at pious images

¹ Maya Corry, Deborah Howard and Mary Laven, 'Introduction,' in *Madonnas and Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy*, eds Maya Corry, Deborah Howard and Mary Laven (London: Philip Wilson, 2017), p. 4.

² David George Wilkins, 'Opening the Doors to Devotion: Trecento Triptychs and Suggestions Concerning Images and Domestic Practice in Florence,' in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. Victor Michael Schmidt (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 371-393.

³ Philip Mattox, 'Domestic Sacral Space in the Florentine Renaissance Palace,' *Renaissance Studies* 20:5 (2006), pp. 658-673; Laura Moretti, 'Spaces for Musical Performance in the Este Court in Ferrara (c. 1440-1540),' in *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space*

merely as products of individual commissions, in which the commissioner played a decisive role in the commissioning process.⁴ On the other hand, there are a few studies, the majority of which broach the serial production of workshops from central Italy, that are centred on the distinction between paintings on commission and works executed for speculative sale.⁵

Another obstacle is the lack of archival evidence on prices of Montagna's pictures of the Virgin and Child, which prevents us from assessing the extent to which the revenue from painting these works supplemented his income from "public" artistic commissions. We do know, however, how much commissioners spent on Montagna's altarpieces. By sifting through published documents, I have been able to compare Montagna's revenue from real estate transactions with the income he earned by painting altarpieces for prestigious families of Vicenza and other centres of the Venetian mainland. The dearth of information provided by primary and secondary sources on the buyers of Montagna's private devotional paintings is yet another hindrance to our full

and Object, eds Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 213-236.

⁴ There is a remarkable bibliography on the role of the patron and the relationship between Renaissance artists and patrons in the commissioning process. For instance, see David Sanderson Chambers, *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971); Settis (2010); Rona Goffen, *Piety and Patronage in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Hope (1990), pp. 535-571; Dennis Romano, 'Aspects of Patronage in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Venice,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 46:4 (1993), pp. 712-733; Martin Wackernagel, *Il mondo degli artisti nel Rinascimento fiorentino: committenti, botteghe e mercato dell'arte* (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1994); Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000); Jill Burke, *Changing Patrons: Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004); Michelle O'Malley, 'Subject Matters, Contracts, Designs, and the Exchange of Ideas between Painters and Clients in Renaissance Italy,' in *Artistic Exchange and Cultural Translation in the Italian Renaissance City* (2004), pp. 17-37.

⁵ In particular, see Ettore Camesasca, *Artisti in bottega* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1969); Annamaria Bernacchioni, 'Le botteghe di pittura: luoghi, strutture e attività,' in *Maestri e botteghe. Pittura a Firenze alla fine del Quattrocento* (exhibition catalogue, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 16 October 1992 – 10 January 1993), eds Mina Gregori, Antonio Paolucci and Cristina Acidini Luchinat (Milan: Silvana, 1992), p. 23; Anabel Thomas, *The Painter's Practice in Renaissance Tuscany* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Carmen Bambach, *Drawing and Painting in the Italian Renaissance Workshop. Theory and Practice, 1300-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Comanducci (2003), pp. 105-113; Louisa C. Matthew, 'Were There Open Markets for Pictures in Renaissance Venice?,' in *The Art Market in Italy (15th-17th Centuries)* (2003), pp. 253-261; O'Malley (2005).

understanding of these works. As yet I could find only two references to the buyers and location of the painter's works for domestic use. First, a notarial document, drafted on 18 March 1490, mentions several works of art in the collection of the Gualdo family in Vicenza. Scholars who have cited this document have generally associated works in oil and fresco by Montagna with paintings in the Gualdo collection.⁶ In addition, it has recently been pointed out that the connoisseur and collector Marcantonio Michiel, who in the 1520s and 1530s recorded seeing devotional pictures in the residences of well-heeled merchants and nobles living in the Veneto, saw two works by Montagna: a *Madonna* in the home of the collector Marco Mantova Benavides and a *Blessing Christ* in the house of Alessandro Cappella.⁷

The documentary gap on the buyers, destination and prices of Montagna's Virgin and Child paintings is not the only problem that scholars have to grapple with in their assessment of his workshop production. Another problem is the critical state of preservation of some of these pious images, such as the *Virgin and Child* (1503) now in the private collection of Paolo Primavesi in Lugano [Fig. 140]. Furthermore, the whereabouts of some of these pictures are still unknown, including the *Virgin and Child* formerly in the Stroganoff collection [Fig. 141]. An equally thorny impediment to scholarship is the fact that only a limited number of Montagna's devotional pictures have undergone technical analysis, such as infrared reflectography (IRR). IRR enables the identification of *pentimenti* in the underdrawing of a painting, as well as of pouncing marks which suggest the use of *spolvero* cartoons for design

⁶ ASVi, *Notarile*, Francesco Sorio, b. 5011, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 107-108; Bernardo Morsolin, 'Il museo Gualdo in Vicenza,' *Nuovo archivio veneto* 8 (1894), pp. 75, 212-215; Puppi (1962), p. 161; Giovanni Zaupa, *Architettura del primo Rinascimento a Vicenza nel laboratorio veneto* (Vicenza: La Serenissima, 1998), p. 215; Carroll (2006), p. 80; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 127-128.

⁷ Michiel (1903), pp. 20, 32. See also Villa in Lucco (2014), p. 358.

transfer. Sometimes, however, the mechanical reproduction of the master's designs can only be hypothesised, as shown by Röstel and Chung in their conservation report on a *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* by Montagna's workshop, painted around 1520 and now in the Courtauld Galleries in London [Fig. 142]. In this report it is stated that the infrared reflectogram details have revealed no sign of squaring or *spolvero* marks in the painting.⁸ The cases in which scientific work does not permit the detection of *spolvero* dots are only one of the impediments that scholars have to cope with. Another issue is posed by the limited number of pricked drawings that has come down to us. For instance, no cartoons used in Giovanni Bellini's *bottega* are extant, although the infrared reflectography examinations conducted on some paintings ascribed to his workshop have evidenced the use of cartoons for design replication.⁹

In the case of Montagna's *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*¹⁰ now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Strasbourg [Fig. 143], technical examinations have not been permitted so far.¹¹ This has prevented scholars from carrying out a more accurate investigation of one of Montagna's most refined works for private devotion. It must be stressed that the Strasbourg *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* was presumably painted around 1520, in the master's late career, a period that has been criticised often by Bernard Berenson, Sidney Joseph Freedberg,

⁸ Alexander Röstel and Jae Youn Chung, 'Bartolomeo Montagna. The Gambier Parry *Madonna and Child with Saint Joseph*,' 30 June 2015, http://courtauld.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CIA1748_Montagna_RF_Report.pdf, consulted 17 April 2018, p. 21.

⁹ Bambach (1999), p. 101.

¹⁰ I will not use the term "Holy Family" to refer to late-fifteenth and early sixteenth-century paintings of the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*. As argued by Carolyn C. Wilson, such a definition is "handy" but "methodologically problematic", as it is "a modern construct", as proven by the fact that a feast of the "Holy Family" was not celebrated by the Church until 1921. For further reference, see Carolyn C. Wilson, 'Invention, Devotion, and the Requirements of Patrons. Titian and the New Cult of St. Joseph,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Titian*, ed. Patricia Meilman (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 88-89.

¹¹ Oral communication by Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, 24 June 2016.

Lionello Puppi and Franco Barbieri. Infrared reflectography examinations on the Strasbourg *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*, which would be facilitated by the good condition of the panel, would guarantee a better understanding of Montagna's underdrawing technique.¹² Moreover, it would help to demonstrate that he was able to paint works of remarkable quality even during his often disregarded late artistic career. The fine quality of the Strasbourg panel indeed debunks some scholars' belief that a loss of creativity and an unsatisfactory stylistic level are hallmarks of the painter's late works.¹³ The same goes for Montagna's *Virgin Adoring the Child* now in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff [Fig. 144]. As regards this panel, painted around 1520, Mauro Lucco has recently argued that its high quality of execution is unusual, given the "period of relative decline" characterising Montagna's late career. The scholar has also suggested that "the very high quality of the design and execution" of the Cardiff painting might be due to the demanding and refined taste of the commissioner.¹⁴ Lucco's proposal seems tenuous, inasmuch as it places excessive weight on the influence that the commissioner's high expectations might have had on the artist's imaginative originality. The exceptional quality of a work of art should also be regarded as a means for the artist not only to display his skill, but also to shape and strengthen the commissioner's identity, notably his individuality. It is therefore sensible to regard a particularly refined work as a tool from which both the painter and commissioner profited.¹⁵ Furthermore, it is worth defining the role of the commissioner in light of the

¹² Lucco (2014), p. 381. I had the opportunity to see this painting a few years ago and I agree with Lucco's remark on the state of conservation of the panel.

¹³ In particular, see Longhi (1946), pp. 14-15; Puppi (1962), p. 64; Barbieri (1982), p. 64.

¹⁴ Lucco (2014), p. 384: "La qualità di ideazione ed esecuzione molto alta può far sembrare questa tavola un poco estranea al momento di relativa decadenza in cui vide la luce; ma può trattarsi della commissione di un cliente molto raffinato ed esigente."

¹⁵ Michelle O'Malley, *Painting Under Pressure: Fame, Reputation and Demand in Renaissance Florence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 63.

terms and conditions of extant contracts for Renaissance altarpieces. The Renaissance patron, as noted by Charles Hope, was usually concerned with the identity of the figures to be depicted, while he gave the artist a great deal of leeway in the choice of the setting and decorative details, as well as the arrangement of the figures.¹⁶ The painter's freedom to accommodate the figures in the composition attests that the quality of the design depended on the ability of the maker rather than the commissioner's. Contracts reveal that the buyer was also interested in setting the value of production materials, time of execution and overall price of the work.¹⁷

Lucco's interpretation of Montagna's Cardiff painting brings to mind the often dismissive approach taken by twentieth-century scholars in their assessment of the painter's late works. This standpoint hinges on scholars' belief that an artist's career necessarily declines in its later stages. The origins of this approach can be traced back to the sixteenth century, more precisely to 1568, when Vasari published the second edition of his *Lives*, in which he argued that Titian should have given up painting once he had become too old. In doing so, Titian would not have tarnished his own reputation as an accomplished artist by painting works of lower quality than those created when he was still young and skillful.¹⁸ In the wake of Vasari's warnings, Raffaello Borghini, in the second edition of his treatise *Il riposo*, first published in Florence in 1584, belittled the invention, perspective and composition of the lost frescoes executed by Pontormo late in his life in the choir of the church of

¹⁶ Hope (1990), p. 541.

¹⁷ O'Malley (2004), pp. 17-18.

¹⁸ Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori scritte da Giorgio Vasari* (Florence: Sansoni, 1981, first published 1550), p. 459. For the English translation, see Vasari (1987), p. 462. For further reference to Vasari's ideas on the ageing artist, particularly Titian, see David Rosand, 'Style and the Aging Artist,' *Art Journal* 46:2 (1987), pp. 91-93; Philip Sohm, *The Artist Grows Old* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 83-103, 105-127; Sophie Bostock, 'The Pictorial Wit of Domenico Tiepolo,' P.h.D. thesis (University of Warwick 2009), pp. 169-172.

San Lorenzo in Florence. According to Borghini, the ageing Pontormo should have contented himself with teaching art and offering advice rather than carrying on painting at the risk of belabouring and worsening his art.¹⁹ Vasari's ideas are also revived in Lomazzo's *Idea del tempio della pittura*, first published in 1590. In this treatise Lomazzo criticises Michelangelo's late manner by branding it as the worst stage of his career.²⁰ Admittedly, the critics' idea of the inescapable waning of an old artist's style after an early phase of tentative artistic production due to inexperience, and a middle phase normally regarded as the most significant spell, was theorised by Roger de Piles in the late seventeenth century. In his *Abrégé de la vie des peintres*, De Piles pinpointed three stages in the development of style: the style of youth, when the fledgeling artist learns from the master; the style of maturity, when the artist develops his own style; and the style of old age, which becomes affected, almost like a caricature.²¹

The negative appraisal of Montagna's late works in twentieth-century scholarship has inevitably downplayed his late artistic production.²² In order to revise this line of thought, it is fundamental to stress that the needs and wants of the buyer are only one possible explanation for the creation of a masterpiece such as Montagna's Cardiff *Virgin Adoring the Child* [Fig. 144]. The latter's sheer quality of execution is a manifestation of Montagna's total command of the medium. Hence, along with the role of the commissioner or buyer, another factor must be taken into account when assessing Montagna's late style: his

¹⁹ Raffaello Borghini, *Il Riposo di Raffaello Borghini In Cui della Pittur[a], e della scultura si favella de più illustri Pitturi, e Scultori, e delle più famose oper[e] loro si fa mentione; e le cos[e] principale appartenenti à dette arte s'insegnano* (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1584), p. 485.

²⁰ Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Scritti sulle arti*, ed. Roberto Paolo Ciardi, 2 vols (Florence: Marchi & Bertolli, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 289, 292, 361.

²¹ Roger de Piles, *Abrégé de la vie des peintres, avec des reflexions sur leurs ouvrages, et un traité du peintre parfait, de la connoissance des desseins, & de l'utilité des estampes* (Paris: Chez Francois Muguet, 1699), p. 96.

²² In particular, see Longhi (1946), pp. 14-15; Puppi (1962), p. 64; Barbieri (1982), p. 64.

experience and mastery of painting, which allowed him to translate into painting what he saw in the real world, as well as the images of reality fixed in his mind. It has also been argued that, since great artists were capable in old age of overcoming health problems caused by obsolescence, they must have transformed reality and mental images into painting somewhat easily.²³ Health problems do not seem to have conditioned the late career of Montagna, who, in his will drafted on 5 October 1521, is described as “a very excellent painter [...], physically and mentally healthy, with a good intellect, clear way of speaking, and really good memory.”²⁴

Another questionable approach by scholarship is the method employed to establish a feasible chronology of Montagna’s *Virgin and Child* paintings. In regard to this, a telling example is the yardstick used by Lucco to conclude that the Strasbourg *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* was painted around 1520 [Fig. 143]. Lucco has observed that the head of the Christ Child is identical to the Christ Child’s head in Montagna’s *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* now in the Museo Correr of Venice [Fig. 145], which, according to Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, was painted between 1515 and 1520.²⁵ Lucco has noted that the head of the Christ Child in the Strasbourg *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* was replicated by the master by reversing the cartoon previously utilised in the Correr panel.²⁶ In other words, Lucco has attempted to demonstrate the chronological proximity of the Strasbourg panel to the Correr panel on the grounds that a workshop cartoon might have been reused by the master for design replication. The risks associated with Lucco’s criterion for dating

²³ Thomas Dormandy, *Old Masters: Great Artists in Old Age* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000), p. 281.

²⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fol. 126, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 49; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 169-170 doct 41; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 150-152.

²⁵ Villa in Lucco (2014), p. 379.

²⁶ Lucco (2014), p. 381.

Montagna's devotional panels emerge when considered next to the method used by Villa to date Montagna's *Virgin and Child with Sts Joseph and Bonaventure* (?), now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza [inventory n. A 9; Fig. 146]. Villa has shown that the Virgin and Child in the Vicenza panel can be superimposed almost perfectly on the *Virgin and Child* now in the Allentown Art Museum [Fig. 147]. Villa has proposed that the *Virgin and Child with Sts Joseph and Bonaventure* (?) was painted around 1507,²⁷ that is over a quarter of a century after the Allentown panel, which Lucco has dated around 1480. Despite the remarkable chronological distance between the two paintings, Lucco has admitted that it is not impossible to accept that Montagna redeployed the same cartoon after so many years.²⁸ The only noticeable difference is the position of the head of the Christ Child, who gazes to the right in the Allentown painting whereas he faces left in the Vicentine panel. The fact that the contours of these figures nearly line up is indicative of the use and reuse of cartoons in Montagna's workshop and, more importantly, of the master's use of the same cartoon in paintings arguably executed at different stages of his career. This method of design replication was implemented in the second half of the fifteenth century in the workshop of Giovanni Bellini,²⁹ to whom Montagna was probably apprenticed during his first trip to Venice in 1469.³⁰

Therefore, Montagna's use of the same cartoon for devotional works painted in different phases of his career leads me to challenge Lucco's suggestion that the Strasbourg *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* necessarily dates back to the same years as the Correr *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* [Figs 143,

²⁷ Villa in Lucco (2014), pp. 366-367.

²⁸ Lucco (2014), p. 292.

²⁹ Jeongmu Yang, 'Giovanni Bellini; Experience and Experiment in Venetian Painting, c. 1460 to 1516,' Ph.D. thesis (University College of London 1998), p. 222; Bambach (1999), pp. 101, 112-114.

³⁰ Puppi (1962), p. 31.

145]. It is undeniable that the contour lines of the Christ Child's face in the former painting coincide with those in the latter. Yet Lucco's proposal that the use of the same cartoon is proof of chronological proximity between the two panels is contradicted by the fact that the design of the *Virgin and Child with Sts Joseph and Bonaventure* was transferred by means of a cartoon employed probably around twenty-five years earlier in the Allentown *Madonna* [Figs 146-147].

We may also question the extent to which the close resemblance between the heads of two figures in two different paintings suffices to infer that the paintings date from the same period. In regard to this, Lucco has highlighted the striking resemblance between the head of St Joseph in the Strasbourg *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*, painted around 1520, and the head of St Job in Montagna's *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece*, painted between 1520 and 1522 [Figs 25, 143]. Lucco has also remarked that the head of the Virgin in the Strasbourg *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* resembles the Virgin's head in the Correr panel [Figs 143, 145].³¹ Similarly, Villa has argued that the *Virgin and Child with Sts Joseph and Bonaventure* (?) dates from around 1507 on account of the close resemblance between the Virgin's face and the facial expression of Montagna's *Blessing Christ* formerly in the Columbus Museum of Art [Figs 146, 148].³² However, from a meticulous scrutiny of the catalogue of Montagna's works, one infers that Virgins with the same facial features can be found even in Virgin and Child paintings that appear to be chronologically very distant from one another. This can be proven by comparing both the *Virgin and Child* now in the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, painted

³¹ Lucco (2014), p. 381.

³² Villa in Lucco (2014), p. 367. Montagna's *Blessing Christ* is now in a private collection, after being sold at auction by Christie's in New York on 27 January 2010 (lot 170). On this, see Lucco (2014), p. 361.

around 1520, and the Strasbourg *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*, to the *Virgin and Child* now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza [inventory n. A 6; Figs 143, 149-150], which is believed to have been painted between 1480 and 1485. The Virgin's face in both the Williamstown and Strasbourg paintings calls to mind the facial features and *chiaroscuro* handling of the Virgin in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza. This shows that the master in his later years was able to readjust designs that he had already utilised in his early works.

Scholars have often strived to isolate Montagna's hand from those of his pupils or collaborators within the same composition, as well as to distinguish originals made by the master from faithful workshop copies or variants containing some modifications to the original design. For instance, Lionello Puppi has argued that Montagna's Courtauld *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* is a workshop copy after the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* now in the Museo Malaspina of Pavia [Figs 142, 151].³³ By contrast, Lucco has recently suggested that the latter was created after the former.³⁴ Puppi's proposal has found confirmation in the conservation report on the Courtauld panel recently published by Alexander Röstel and Jae Youn Chung. Despite no signs of transfer methods such as squaring or pouncing marks being detected through X-radiography and IRR, the absence of changes to the composition beneath the paint layers betrays the fact that the underdrawing was carried out without hesitation. Hence, Röstel and Chung have postulated that the panel might be a workshop copy.³⁵ This is only one of the many cases in which scholars dealing

³³ Puppi (1962), pp. 121, 168; Id., 'Giovanni Speranza,' *Rivista dell'istituto nazionale d'archeologia e storia dell'arte* 11-12 (1963), p. 395.

³⁴ Lucco (2014), p. 404.

³⁵ Röstel and Chung (2015), pp. 11-12. Although I have not had the opportunity to see the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* in Pavia, I agree with Röstel and Chung's hypothesis that the Courtauld version might be a workshop copy of the Pavia version.

with workshop paintings have endeavoured to distinguish a copy from its original. This approach needs to take into account the fact that Renaissance commissioners in Italy drew no such neat distinction between an original and its replicas. In discussing the use and reuse of cartoons in Perugino's workshop, Rudolf Hiller von Gaertringen has indeed pointed out that, at the time the painter was active, there was often no awareness of the disparity between an original and a copy.³⁶ In light of this, it is essential to consider the Renaissance mentality, particularly how its concept of originality differs from today's, in the reconstruction of the social, religious and economic context in which private devotional paintings were created in Renaissance Italy.

³⁶ Rudolf Hiller von Gaertringen, 'Uso e riuso del cartone nell'opera del Perugino. L'arte fra vita contemplativa e produttività,' in *Pietro Vannucci il Perugino: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi; 25-28 ottobre 2000*, ed. Laura Teza (Perugia: Volumnia Edizioni, 2004), p. 339.

2.2 The Religious and Socioeconomic Context of Montagna's Private Devotional Paintings

In this section I intend to reconstruct the spiritual, social and economic background against which private devotional paintings need to be assessed. Mauro Lucco's catalogue of Montagna's *oeuvre* lists around sixty-five religious works, of which thirty-nine show only the Virgin and Child, which attests that the artist was a prolific devotional painter. In order to gain a better contextual understanding of his Virgin and Child paintings, it is critical to provide a clear snapshot of the well-established cult of the Virgin Mary in Vicenza and Venice between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The development of a new form of lay spirituality cultivated in the private sphere is yet another key aspect discussed in this section.³⁷

Marian devotion was well-established in Vicenza as early as the fourteenth century, when, according to Giovanni Mantese, the confraternities of Santa Maria and Santi Felice e Fortunato invoked the Virgin Mary at the beginning of their official activities and celebrations.³⁸ Mantese also related that an oratory dedicated to the *Concezione* was built in 1325 in the Franciscan church of San Lorenzo, and the synod of 1349 decreed that all churches should include prayers to the Virgin Mary in the mass.³⁹ In the wake of this, four churches in Vicenza were erected and dedicated to the Virgin Mary during the fifteenth century, including the church of the Santuario di Monte Berico. The latter was built between 1428 and 1529, as a result of two miraculous

³⁷ As regards the laity's use of household images of the Virgin and Child within the seclusion of their homes in Renaissance Venice, see Donal Cooper, 'Devotion,' in *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (exhibition catalogue, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 5 October 2006 – 7 January 2007), eds Marta Ajamar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis (London: V&A Publications, 2006), pp. 190-203.

³⁸ Mantese (1964b), vol. 3:1, p. 453.

³⁹ Ibid., vol. 3:1, pp. 453-454.

apparitions of the Virgin to the devout Vincenza Pasini on the Monte Berico on 7 March 1426 and 2 August 1428.⁴⁰ The apparitions are recorded in a seventeenth-century account by the historian Giacomo Marzari, who commended the providential intervention of the Virgin Mary in plague-stricken Vicenza during the first quarter of the Quattrocento. The miracle is also reported in Sebastiano Rumor's history of the sanctuary.⁴¹

The spiritual and political connotations of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Venice have been amply discussed. Venetians generally believed that the city was founded on 25 March 421, the day of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary. This coincidence would account for their belief that there was a close connection between Venice and the Virgin Mary, under whose protection the city was therefore held to be.⁴² Aside from the feast of the Annunciation, the feast of the Purification, also called the "festival of the twelve Maries," was celebrated on 2 February for eight consecutive days and included a procession from St Mark's Square to the church of Santa Maria Formosa.⁴³ The third and probably main civic celebration of the Republic was the Ascension Fair, the *Sensa* in Venetian dialect, held on 15 August. On this occasion, the Byzantine icon of the *Madonna Nicopeia* [Fig. 152], taken from Constantinople to Venice in 1204 by Doge Enrico Dandolo and donated to the church of St Mark in

⁴⁰ Ibid., vol. 3:2, pp. 575-576. According to Mantese, the four churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary in Vicenza in the fifteenth century were Santa Maria di Monte Berico, Santa Maria del Cengio di Isola Vicentina, Santa Maria de Gazzo, and Santa Maria del Monte Summano.

⁴¹ Giacomo Marzari, *La Historia di Vicenza* (Vicenza: Appresso Giorgio Greco, 1604), pp. 110-112; Sebastiano Rumor, *Storia documentata del Santuario di Monte Berico* (Vicenza: Pontificia S. Giuseppe, 1911), pp. 12, 43-45.

⁴² Edward Muir, *Civil Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 70, 139.

⁴³ Marin Sanudo, *Le vite dei dogi*, ed. Giovanni Monticolo (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1900), cols 128-129. See also Giovanni Musolino, 'Culto mariano,' in *Culto dei santi a Venezia*, eds Silvio Tramontin, Carlo Candiani, Giovanni Musolino and Antonio Niero (Venice: Edizioni Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 1965), pp. 256-260; Silvio Tramontin, 'Il 'Kalendarium' veneziano,' in *Culto dei santi a Venezia* (1965), pp. 290-291; Muir (1981), pp. 135-136; Goffen (1986), pp. 139-141.

1234,⁴⁴ was carried in procession through St Mark's Square.⁴⁵ The origins of this feast can be traced back to 1177, when, on 24 July, Doge Sebastiano Ziani was gifted a ring blessed by Pope Alexander III. Thereafter, each year the doge threw a ring into the lagoon from the *Bucintoro*, the state barge of the doges of Venice, in celebration of the symbolic marriage between the city and the Sea, which became a key moment of the Ascension Fair.⁴⁶ Further proof of the government's adoption of the cult of the Virgin Mary is provided by the Venetian diarist Marin Sanudo (1466-1536). On "all the days of Our Lady" the doges of Venice used to attend mass in the church of St Mark, where they publicly manifested their faithfulness to the Virgin Mary.⁴⁷ The doges also expressed their devotion through art. Indeed, it was mandatory for the newly appointed doge to commission and pay for a votive painting dedicated to the Virgin Mary. For instance, in 1488 Doge Agostino Barbarigo entrusted Giovanni Bellini with the execution of a large votive panel showing *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Mark and Augustine, the Kneeling Agostino Barbarigo and Two Musical Angels* for his official residence in the Doge's Palace [Fig. 115].⁴⁸ Bellini's panel, now in the church of San Pietro Martire in Murano, is a compelling visual representation of Agostino Barbarigo's desire to commend his authority to the protection of the enthroned Virgin.

Scholars have reconstructed the origins and diffusion of the cult and

⁴⁴ Musolino (1965), pp. 245-246; Rona Goffen, 'Icon and Vision: Giovanni Bellini's Half-Length Madonnas,' *The Art Bulletin* 57:4 (1975), pp. 508-509; James H. Moore, 'Venezia favorita da Maria: Music for the Madonna Nicopeia and Santa Maria della Salute,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 37 (1984), pp. 299-355; Goffen (1986), p. 142.

⁴⁵ Marin Sanudo, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin, 58 vols (Bologna: Forni, 1969-1970), vol. 3, col. 632, 15 August 1500: "Fo fato la precessiom atorno la piazza, e il patriarca cantò la messa, e fo portà una nostra Dona a torno, si dice fata di man de San Lucha"; Giuseppe Dalla Santa, *Di alcune manifestazioni del culto dell'Immacolata Concezione in Venezia dal 1480 alla metà del secolo XVI* (Venice: Tipografia Patriarcale già Cordella, 1904), p. 8; Goffen (1986), p. 142.

⁴⁶ Muir (1981), p. 124.

⁴⁷ Sanudo (1900), tome 22:4, p. 88.

⁴⁸ Oskar Bätschmann, *Giovanni Bellini* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), p. 78.

feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Venice. The feast, on 8 December, was already celebrated by the Franciscan order during the Trecento, although it was only in 1477 that it was officially recognised by Pope Sixtus IV.⁴⁹ Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the cult was particularly celebrated by the Franciscans in the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. Other centres for the cult in Venice were the parish church of San Giacomo dell'Orio and the *Scuole Grandi* of Santa Maria della Misericordia (by 1493) and Santa Maria della Carità (from 1496).⁵⁰ Overall, tangible evidence of the influence of the cult of the Virgin Mary on Venetian public art is offered by the Venetian historian Bernardo Giustiniani, who in 1457 recorded twenty-one churches and three hundred altars dedicated to the Virgin Mary in Venice.⁵¹ Yet the widespread diffusion of this cult in Venice is not the only aspect that testifies to the success of the *Virgin and Child* type both in church altarpieces and works for private devotion painted in Venice and the *terraferma* during the fifteenth century.

The success of private devotional paintings stems from the development of a form of spirituality experienced more directly, whose origins hark back to the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, when thinkers laid emphasis on psychological self-examination.⁵² The discovery of the “individual,” as John

⁴⁹ Arsène Le Carou, *L'office divin chez les Frères mineurs au XIIIe siècle. Son origine. Sa destinée* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1928), p. 207.

⁵⁰ Dalla Santa (1904), pp. 8, 11. See also Goffen (1986), p. 146.

⁵¹ *Orazioni, Elogi E Vite Scritte Da Letterati Veneti Patrizi In Lode Di Dogi, Ed Altri Illustri Soggetti: Compresavi Alcune Inedite, E Tutte Per La Prima Volta Volgarizzate* (Venice: Curti, 1798, 2nd edition, first published 1795), p. 58.

⁵² On this, see Richard William Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 219-257; Id., *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 29-60; Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual: 1050-1200* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973, first published 1972); John Frederick Benton, ‘Individualism and Conformity in Medieval Western Europe,’ in *Individuality and Conformism in Classical Islam*, eds Amin Banani and Speros Vryonis, Jr. (Wiesbaden: Otto. Harrassowitz, 1977), pp. 145-158; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 82-109; John Frederick Benton,

Benton has noted, consisted in exploring one's own self, the inner landscape of human being, so as to conform the "inner man" to God.⁵³ Not only was likeness to God the main goal of the process of discovery and development of the self in the twelfth century, but it also became, as Robert Javelet and Karl Morrison have pointed out, a theological category.⁵⁴ Later, during the transition from medieval to early modern Christianity, the masses were driven to pursue a more intimate rapport with Christ as a result of the rapid dissemination of the *Devotio Moderna* movement. The *Devotio Moderna* was a lay religious movement that had its roots in fourteenth-century Holland, as a result of the ideas and preachings of the Dutch deacon Gerard Groote (1340-1384) and of his master John van Ruysbroeck (1293-1381).⁵⁵ The aim of this movement was to bolster a new form of spirituality based on the examination of one's conscience and on contemplation, and made accessible to all social classes of the laity.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the need for a piety felt more directly in the private sphere was a consequence of the Papal Schism, that is, the rift within the Roman Catholic Church occurring in the years 1378-1417. During those years, papal excommunications and penalties, alongside the inefficiency of the clergy in doctrinal and spiritual matters, led to a more individualistic spirituality.⁵⁷ The

'Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality,' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable with Carol D. Lanham (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), pp. 263-295.

⁵³ Morris (1973), pp. 64-65; Bynum (1982), p. 87; Benton (1985), pp. 263-295.

⁵⁴ Robert Javelet, *Image et ressemblance au douzième siècle de saint Anselme à Alain de Lille*, 2 vols (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1967); Karl F. Morrison, 'The Structure of Holiness in Othloh's *Vita Bonifatii* and Ebo's *Vita Ottonis*,' in *Law, Church and Society: Essays in Honor of Stephan Kuttner*, eds Kenneth Pennington and Robert Somerville (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), pp. 131-156.

⁵⁵ Carlo Egger, 'Devozione moderna,' in *Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione*, 10 vols (Milan: Edizioni Paoline, 1976), vol. 3, p. 457.

⁵⁶ André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Belief and Devotional Practices*, ed. Daniel Bornstein, trans. Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1993, 2nd edition, first published 1987), p. 25. See also Margaret Anne Morse, 'The Arts of Domestic Devotion in Renaissance Italy: The Case of Venice,' P.h.D. thesis (University of Maryland 2006), pp. 112-113.

⁵⁷ Egger (1976), pp. 456-457.

latter consisted in embracing a pragmatic theology, based on reading the Bible and the works written by the Church Fathers, while dismissing the speculative approach of medieval Christian theologians.

Another determining factor that fuelled a more intimate form of spirituality was a pragmatic Christocentrism, which developed in the eleventh century and was later fostered by mendicant orders, particularly the Cistercians and Franciscans. Since its foundation in the thirteenth century, the Franciscan order had called for meditation on and compassion for the human suffering of Christ and the Virgin, while prompting the devotee to imitate the example set by Christ in his life.⁵⁸ It must be noted that the swift spread of a more affective piety in late Quattrocento Italy was also fostered by the printing and translation into vernacular of several devotional texts of the *Devotio Moderna* movement, such as Thomas à Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi*⁵⁹ and Isaac de Syria's *Libro de la Perfezione de la Vita Contemplativa*.⁶⁰ In fact, the use of the vernacular rather than Latin for religious purposes, an element which certainly had an agency in the laity's full grasp of Christian dogmas, was common in late medieval Italy, as sermons had been preached in the vernacular to lay audiences since the thirteenth century.⁶¹ By contrast, the high cost of manuscripts and low level of

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 460.

⁵⁹ Thomas à Kempis, *De imitatione Christi* (Paris: per Magistrum petrum le dru co[m]morantem In vico maturinorum Anno d[omi]ni 1498 die vero vltima mensis Aprilis, 1498, first published 1473).

⁶⁰ Isaac de Syria, *Libro della perfezione della vita contemplativa* (Venice: Boneto Locatelli, 1500), VII, fols 8r-8v. For the impact of this devotional text on Venetian art, see Augusto Gentili, *I giardini di contemplazione. Lorenzo Lotto, 1503-1512* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1985), p. 96.

⁶¹ Carlo Delcorno, 'Medieval Preaching in Italy (1200-1500),' in *The Sermon*, directed by Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), p. 494; Augustine Thompson, 'From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event,' in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 17; Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, 'Italian Pulpits: Preaching, Art, and Spectacle,' in *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200-1600*, eds Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 123-143; Eliana Corbari, *Vernacular Theology: Dominican Sermons and Audience in Late Medieval Italy* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 25-26.

education considerably limited the faithful's access to sacred texts.⁶²

The beginning of the era of the private image was marked by the introduction of the *juspatronatus* system, by which the lay donor was legally guaranteed patronage rights to a church in exchange for the provision of funds for the maintenance of the building.⁶³ This was, according to Peter Humfrey, at odds with the influential role that the clergy managed to retain in the fifteenth century, when the laity began to play a decisive part in the commissioning of altarpieces destined for places of public worship.⁶⁴ Consequently, images for private devotion began to be produced in the late Middle Ages so as to cater for the devotee's need to interact with the Godhead more directly in household spaces. This is not to say that the diffusion of the cult image for private devotion in late medieval and early Renaissance Italy curtailed ecclesiastical control over private life. Indeed, by the fourteenth century the Church was exerting its authority over private households through family visits paid by Dominican and Franciscan friars, whose teaching played a seminal role in providing the laity with spiritual guidance in the private sphere.⁶⁵ Domestic images, as well as prayer books, became instrumental in privatising the faithful's experience with the mystical. More realistic pious images replaced their older versions, whose distant holy figures failed to elicit the believer's imagination. Likewise, new versions of the sacred texts, which contained more vivid descriptions from the lives of the saints, began to be read in place of the Bible. The main function of these texts was to stress the message of the cult

⁶² Morse (2006), pp. 107-108.

⁶³ For a useful overview of *ius patronatus*, see Burke (2004), pp. 101ff.; Sandra Richards, 'From the Chapel to the Gallery: The Aestheticization of Altarpieces in Early Modern Italy,' P.h.D. thesis (University of Toronto 2013), p. 30.

⁶⁴ Humfrey (1993), pp. 71-72.

⁶⁵ Charles de La Roncière, 'Tuscan Notables on the Eve of the Renaissance,' in *A History of Private Life*, eds Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, 5 vols (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap Press, 1988), vol. 2, pp. 302-309.

image, which conjured up the holy figures that the believer wished to see when engrossed in contemplation and meditation.⁶⁶

The devotion to the Virgin Mary in Vicenza and Venice, and the inwardness and subjectivity of the faith of the laity between the Quattrocento and Cinquecento, are major factors that help contextualise private devotional paintings. Yet economic as well as religious factors need to be considered in order to offer a substantially more comprehensive picture of the production of pious images made, as we shall see, either on commission or for speculative sale. Not only the buyer's spiritual needs and wants, but also the rise of consumerism in Renaissance Italy increased the production of paintings for private devotion. Indeed, Italians' growing habit of spending in the Renaissance period, an aspect which scholarship has long emphasised, encouraged the acquisition of goods in ever-increasing amounts.⁶⁷ In other words, a form of economic materialism gained ground in the Italian society as a driving force of the marketplace, in anticipation of modern capitalism. The accumulation of wealth in the economy of early modern Italy has been linked particularly to the phenomenon of luxury consumption. More to the point, studies in the field of economic history have shown that an escalation of expenditure for the arts, and for luxury wares in the main, sprang from the decline of Italy's economy caused by a drastic reduction in profit-driven activities in the business sector.⁶⁸ It is against this economic background that

⁶⁶ Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, first published 1994), pp. 411-412. As regards old images' failure to establish a connection with the beholder, Belting argues that "The old cult image, in contrast, steadfastly refused to allow its content to be manipulated by the wishes of the beholder" (p. 410).

⁶⁷ Richard A. Goldthwaite, 'The Economy of Renaissance Italy: The Preconditions for Luxury Consumption,' *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 2 (1987), p. 16.

⁶⁸ Robert S. Lopez, 'Hard Times and Investment in Culture,' in *The Renaissance: A Symposium, February 8-10, 1952* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1953), pp. 19-32; John Hicks, *A*

devotional painters' production of goods intended for private use, such as small-scale pictures of the Virgin and Child, should be assessed.

Montagna's remarkable production of thirty-nine small pictures of the Virgin and Child in a vertical format⁶⁹ fits into this process of enhanced productivity fuelled by rising demand for this type of devotional imagery in the popular market. His preference for this type of paintings, which were particularly suitable for domestic settings,⁷⁰ may be symptomatic of a marketing strategy aimed at catering to a more personal form of spirituality among the laity in late Quattrocento Italy.⁷¹ Montagna's Virgin and Child output is slightly less than the forty-four⁷² extant small-scale paintings of the Virgin and Child in a vertical format attributed to the hand of Giovanni Bellini, and larger than the twenty-seven paintings of the same type catalogued under the name of Cima da Conegliano.⁷³ These comparisons are all the more telling when one takes into account that Bellini and Cima were the leading makers of private devotional

Theory of Economic History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 58-59. See also Richard A. Goldthwaite, 'The Painting Industry in Early Modern Italy,' in Richard E. Spear and Philip Sohm, *Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-Century Italian Painters* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 277.

⁶⁹ My data comes from analysis of the works in the catalogue of Montagna's autograph works in Lucco (2014), pp. 283-391.

⁷⁰ As noted by Peter Humfrey, 'Sacred Images,' in *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting* (exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 18 June 2006 - 17 September 2006; and Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, 17 October 2006 - 7 January 2007), eds David Alan Brown and Sylvia Ferino-Pagden (Washington: National Gallery; Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2006), p. 58.

⁷¹ Morse (2006), pp. 112-113. See also Cooper (2006), p. 202.

⁷² For further reference to all the figures provided above, see Goffen (1989), pp. 23-66; Anchise Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini* (New York; London: Abbeville, 1999), pp. 192-233; *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion* (exhibition catalogue, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, 11 September 2004 - 2 January 2005), ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indiana Museum of Art, 2004), pp. 7-127; *Giovanni Bellini* (2008), pp. 132-322; Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, *Giovanni Bellini* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2008), pp. 244-257.

⁷³ My data comes from analysis of the works in the catalogue of autograph works by Cima and his shop in Peter Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 77-173; Elisabetta Francescutti, 'Paesaggi di devozione: Cima e il tema della Madonna con il Bambino,' in *Cima da Conegliano: poeta del paesaggio* (published on the occasion of the exhibition held at the Palazzo Sarcinelli, Conegliano Veneto, 26 February 2010 - 2 June 2010), ed. Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa (Venice: Marsilio, 2010), pp. 43-49; and Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa et al., 'Le opere,' in *Cima da Conegliano: poeta del paesaggio* (2010), pp. 92-185.

panel paintings in late fifteenth-century Venice.⁷⁴ However, it should be remembered that Vicenza was at the time under Venetian rule, which may have boosted the cult of the Virgin Mary in the Venetian mainland. In addition, the substantial number of Virgin and Child paintings ascribed to Montagna and his workshop suggests that there must have been a high demand for private devotional paintings not only in Venice but also in its subject territories.⁷⁵ That said, although Montagna's workshop was located in Vicenza, as proven by documentary evidence,⁷⁶ it is plausible that the painter decided to ship some of his Virgin and Child paintings to the capital of the *Serenissima*, where, as noted earlier, these works were also coveted. A large amount of these paintings are indeed consistently cited in sixteenth-century Venetian inventories.⁷⁷ It has been suggested that small-scale, cheap devotional imagery could have been shipped also to pilgrimage sites such as Rome and Loreto.⁷⁸ In light of this, the pivotal role played by Montagna in the production of images for private devotion needs to be reassessed.

The last aspect which accounts for Renaissance artists' high rates of production and broad diffusion of pious images in early modern Italy is the "highly self-conscious taste" which has been singled out as a peculiar trait of

⁷⁴ As noted by Keith Christiansen, 'Giovanni Bellini and the Practice of Devotional Painting,' in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion* (2004), p. 22.

⁷⁵ As noted by Diana Norman in relation to the significance and function of Marian imagery in Siena's subject cities during the late Middle Ages. On this, see Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 16-17.

⁷⁶ See the *registro di cassa* of the Squarzi family, in the financial years 1496-1499: "Item 9.6.0 have magistro depentor in bottega de Bartolomeo Montagna li 10 aprile [...]," cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 34, 44-47 doct 5; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 132-133.

⁷⁷ Neil De Marchi and Louisa C. Matthew, 'I dipinti,' in *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa*, eds Franco Franceschi, Richard A. Goldthwaite and Reinhold C. Mueller, 6 vols (Treviso; Costabissara: Fondazione Cassamarca; Angelo Colla Editore, 2007), vol. 4: *Commercio e cultura mercantile*, p. 268.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

Italian society.⁷⁹ A meaningful example of self-awareness and individuality is found in the ethical dialogue *On Pleasure* written by the fifteenth-century philosopher Lorenzo Valla. Valla provides a useful glimpse of the mentality of the Renaissance fair-goer who was able to guess or discern the hand of the artists whose works were on sale.⁸⁰ The satisfaction gained by the fair-goer when recognising a pictorial manner and ascribing a work of art to a specific artist has been correctly linked by Creighton Gilbert to the sense of individuality characterising Renaissance customers.⁸¹ Moreover, self-awareness refers to consumers' habit of acquiring goods with the effect that the chosen object could have on them in mind. For instance, Francesco Datini (1335-1410), the most famous merchant from Prato,⁸² purchased inexpensive and profitable works of art off the rack with an eye toward fulfilling his spiritual needs rather than his aesthetic taste.⁸³ In other words, when buyers purchased devotional objects for domestic use, they were certainly driven by their spiritual needs, to which the Virgin and Child paintings by Montagna, Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano catered.

⁷⁹ Goldthwaite (1987), p. 21.

⁸⁰ Lorenzo Valla, *On Pleasure = De voluptate*, translated by A. Kent Hieatt and Maristella Lorch; introduction by Maristella de Panizza Lorch (New York: Abaris Books, 1977), p. 200.

⁸¹ Creighton Gilbert, 'What Did the Renaissance Patron Buy?', *Renaissance Quarterly* 51:2 (1998), p. 410.

⁸² Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato* (London: J. Cape, 1960), pp. 41-42.

⁸³ Jeremy Lerner, *Culture and Society in Italy, 1290-1420* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), pp. 313-314; Gilbert (1998), p. 402.

2.3 The Virgin and Child Paintings by Montagna, Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano

In this section I shall focus on recurring details of pious images for domestic settings which are indicative of devotional painters' response to the ordinary believer's need for a spirituality felt more directly.

Ronda Kasl has argued that in Giovanni Bellini's pictures of the Virgin and Child the Virgin's large hands served to direct the attention of the worshipper to the holy figure, to stimulate their imagination and prevent their attention from being drawn elsewhere.⁸⁴ The prayer gesture of the Virgin appears, for instance, in the *Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Child*, also known as the *Davis Madonna*, painted by Giovanni Bellini in the early 1460s and now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York [Fig. 153]. The same applies to Montagna's Virgin and Child pictures, where the Virgin is often represented with expressive hands clasped in prayer, a detail which was aimed at capturing the beholder's attention and emphasising a common gesture of prayer among Christians. The Virgin's hands, characterised by long, tapering fingers, are, so to speak, a hallmark of Montagna's devotional images. They are devotional aids in their own right, in that they are made an object of meditation. Such an emphasis on specific features, aimed at enabling the commissioner or potential buyer to identify himself with the holy figures depicted, may be looked upon also as a marketing strategy. This has been argued by Megan Holmes with regards to certain striking features of the saints depicted by Neri di Bicci in his

⁸⁴ Ronda Kasl, 'Holy Households: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Venice,' in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion* (2004), p. 80.

late altarpieces and tabernacles.⁸⁵ A meaningful example in Montagna's *oeuvre* is the *Virgin Adoring the Child* now in the Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Barberini in Rome, commonly dated between 1475 and 1480 [Fig. 154]. In this panel the Virgin's hands are folded together in prayer, a gesture that recurs in many other works by Montagna, including nine small-scale pictures of the *Virgin and Child* [Figs 143-145, 149-151, 155⁸⁶, 156⁸⁷, 157⁸⁸], six altarpieces [Figs 1, 13, 19,⁸⁹ 25, 158⁹⁰, 159⁹¹], the fresco of the *Crucifixion* in the abbey of Praglia [Fig. 71], and the lost fresco of the *Adoration of the Child with Saints and the Donor Pietro Proti*, formerly in the Proti Chapel in the cathedral of Vicenza [Fig. 15]. The frequency with which Montagna depicted the Virgin's praying hands is in keeping with the great stress placed, according to Sixten Ringbom, on the parts of the bodies of Christ and the Virgin Mary in fifteenth-century devotional texts.⁹² Accordingly, the rise of the dramatic close-up in private devotional paintings enabled artists to augment the visual and emotional impact of the individual parts of the body of the holy model on the pious beholder. The half-length depiction of the holy figures and their presentation in a window-like opening endowed them with hieratic solemnity, which complied with the

⁸⁵ Megan Holmes, 'Neri di Bicci and the Commodification of Artistic Values in Florentine Painting (1450-1500),' in *The Art Market in Italy (15th-17th Centuries)* (2003), p. 218.

⁸⁶ The *Head of the Virgin*, probably a fragment of a painting of the *Virgin Adoring the Child*, painted between 1475 and 1480 and now in the Kunsthalle of Bremen [Fig. 155].

⁸⁷ The *Virgin Adoring the Blessing Child* [inventory n. A 355; Fig. 156], painted between 1475 and 1480 and now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza in the Palazzo Chiericati.

⁸⁸ The *Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Child* [inventory n. 1098; Fig. 157], painted between 1480 and 1485 and now in the National Gallery of London.

⁸⁹ The *Adoration of the Child*, painted around 1520 for the parish church of Orgiano, near Vicenza [Fig. 19].

⁹⁰ The *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Peter, John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalen, Francis and the Blessed Giacomo della Marca and Bernardino Tomitano of Feltre*, painted by Montagna and his son Benedetto (?) between 1515 and 1520 and now in the Courtauld Galleries of London [Fig. 158].

⁹¹ The *Virgin and Child with Sts James and Philip*, painted in 1499 for the parish church of Sandrigo, near Vicenza, and now in Glasgow Museums [Fig. 159].

⁹² Ringbom (1984), p. 48.

emotionalism specific to lay piety in early Renaissance Italy.⁹³

In the *Virgin Adoring the Child* of Palazzo Barberini, prayer and worship are also expressed by Montagna through the inclusion of a book of prayer on the ledge where the Christ Child is sitting [Fig. 154]. More importantly, both the left foot of the Christ Child and the book of prayer are painted in *trompe l'oeil*, thereby giving the illusion of trespassing on our world. Montagna's use of such a deceptively realistic painting style counterbalances the separation, suggested by the thickness of the parapet, between the real space of the beholder and the painted sacred space. Furthermore, the association of the Virgin's praying hands with the book of prayer was meant to mirror and elicit the devotee's contemplation and meditation during prayer. In the Palazzo Barberini panel Montagna undoubtedly placed emphasis on the Virgin's expressive hands and the prayer book with an eye toward increasing his work's appeal to the God-seeking worshipper. For the same reason, he took advantage of the window scheme, which was peculiar to the *en buste* presentation of holy figures in private devotional pictures.

The total nakedness of the Christ Child in the Palazzo Barberini panel is another striking detail, which attests to Montagna's knowledge of the "incarnational theology" characterising Christianity in the Renaissance, to use John W. O'Malley's words.⁹⁴ The display of the Christ Child's *pudenda* is found in twenty-two out of thirty-nine Virgin and Child paintings by Montagna.⁹⁵ The exhibition of the infant Christ's nudity is particularly blatant in Montagna's

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 50-52.

⁹⁴ See postscript by John W. O'Malley in Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996, 2nd edition, first published 1983), p. 213.

⁹⁵ My data comes from analysis of the works in the catalogue of Montagna's autograph works in Lucco (2014), pp. 283-391.

Virgin Adoring the Child of Palazzo Barberini. The Christ Child is shown frontally in the foreground in a stiff position, with his legs stretched sideways and his genitals ostentatiously exhibited. Such an unabashed depiction of the Christ Child's genitals was meant to offer strong visual evidence of the mystery of the Incarnation by highlighting the *humanity* of Christ as opposed to his divine nature. According to Leo Steinberg, between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the representation of the Christ Child's body became all the more naturalistic, especially in comparison to the highly dignified depiction of the figure in Byzantine and medieval art. This was also due, again according to Steinberg, to the emphasis placed since the thirteenth century on the human nature of Christ, particularly by Franciscans, for whom nakedness served as an image of poverty.⁹⁶ As a matter of fact, this association appeared in devotional literature as early as the late eleventh century, when not only the laity but also monastic orders, such as the Cistercians, took to conforming to the dictum "naked to follow the naked Christ."⁹⁷ The origins of this ascetic motto hark back to the Latin Church Father St Jerome (c. 347-419/20), who, in four of his letters, urged the reader to be "naked to follow the naked Christ" (*Nudus nudum Christum sequi* [or *sequere*]).⁹⁸ A decisive contribution to the rise in popularity of this slogan during the late Middle Ages was made by Franciscan preachers, such as Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1221-1274). Bonaventure linked St Jerome's motto to one of the most relevant and morally charged episodes of

⁹⁶ Steinberg (1996), pp. 10-11, 33. On Franciscan doctrine of poverty, see Duncan Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Franciscan Order: From Saint Francis to the Foundation of the Capuchins* (Rome: Capuchin Historical Institute, 1987), pp. 95-108.

⁹⁷ Franco Mormando, 'Nudus nudum Christum sequi: The Franciscans and Differing Interpretations of Male Nakedness in Fifteenth-Century Italy,' *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 33 (2008), p. 174.

⁹⁸ For a thorough discussion on the history of St Jerome's motto, see Réginald Grégoire, 'Nudus nudum Christum sequi,' in *Studi storici in onore di Ottorino Bertolini*, 2 vols (Pisa: Pacini, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 395-409; Jean Châtillon, 'Nudum Christum nudus sequere,' in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*, 4 vols (Grottaferrata, Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1974), vol. 4, pp. 719-772.

the life of St Francis, when he fully disrobed in public as a sign of renunciation of all worldly goods.⁹⁹

In Montagna's *Virgin Adoring the Child* of Palazzo Barberini the gaze of the Virgin, who is pensively looking downward towards the lower limbs of her son, effectively draws the beholder's attention to the Christ Child's genitals [Fig. 154]. In doing so, Montagna laid emphasis on the Christ Child's naked genitals as a sign of his human fleshliness. This is in keeping with Leo Steinberg's idea that Renaissance artists' bold depiction of the Christ Child's *pudenda* in paintings of the Virgin and Child was, as never before in Christian art, an unmistakable and outright reference to the sexuality, and therefore humanness, of the baby Jesus.¹⁰⁰ In addition, Steinberg has pointed out that the attention drawn by Renaissance artists to the infant Christ's nakedness might hinge on their awareness of the semantic implications of the association of the term *pudenda*, from the Latin *pudere* (which means "to be ashamed of"), with Christ's genitals. According to Steinberg, this awareness would account for Michelangelo's decision not to sculpt a loincloth in his statue of the *Risen Christ* for the Roman church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva (1514-1520) [Fig. 160]. Indeed, the inclusion of a loincloth would have led the onlooker to regard Christ's genitals as a token of sinfulness, in accordance with the literal meaning of the Latin word *pudenda*.¹⁰¹

Caroline Walker Bynum has offered an alternative interpretation of the total nakedness of the Christ Child's body in Renaissance devotional paintings by going beyond Steinberg's contribution to this complex topic. More to the

⁹⁹ Mormando (2008), p. 175.

¹⁰⁰ Steinberg (1996), p. 71.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 19, 21.

point, by claiming that fifteenth-century theologians were not interested in stressing Christ's maleness, she has challenged Steinberg's conviction that the bold exhibition of the baby Jesus' genitals functioned as an overt allusion to his male sexuality. According to Bynum, theologians aimed to discuss Christ's gender merely in terms of the human suffering caused by the circumcision.¹⁰² The identification of Jesus as mother, based on the connection between *Ecclesia*, notably the "nurturing" heads of the Church, and Christ's body, stands out as Bynum's crucial contribution to the debate on the sexuality of Christ in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The notion of breastfeeding, according to Bynum, is depicted in two fifteenth-century paintings, Quirizio of Murano's *The Saviour* and a *Christ and Charity* by an anonymous master from northwest Germany [Figs 161-162]. While in the former the concept of suckling is suggested by Jesus' act of offering his wound to a nun of the order of the Poor Clares, in the latter it is evoked by Christ's gesture of filling the cup held by the allegorical personification of Charity with the blood spurting from his chest's wound.¹⁰³ In light of this, Bynum has concluded that the depiction of the naked body of the baby Jesus must have conjured up, in the eyes of the beholder, the image of Christ's blood and suffering during the circumcision; and secondly, it must have prompted the viewer to identify Christ as a nurturing mother, the latter being both the Church and the Virgin Mary.

The bold display of the Christ Child's nudity also recurs in the private devotional paintings by Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano. Bellini made around forty-four paintings of the Virgin and Child in a vertical format, of

¹⁰² Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, Zone Books; Cambridge, Mass.: Distributed by MIT Press, 2012, 6th edition, first published 1991), p. 91.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 103, 106.

which fifteen show the Christ Child's *pudenda*. He also depicted the naked genitals of the Christ Child in six out of ten devotional pictures in a horizontal format.¹⁰⁴ This format, first introduced by Bellini in the latter half of the 1480s, enabled him to broaden the picture field so as to depict the Virgin and Child flanked by saints, as in *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Catherine and Mary Magdalen*, painted around 1490 and now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia of Venice [Fig. 163]. In this painting all the figures are seen half-length and comfortably fill the composition without appearing squeezed. Later, in the early 1500s, Bellini further enlarged the picture field of his paintings in a horizontal format for the purpose of showing the Virgin full-length with an expansive view of the landscape in the backdrop. An example of this new type is the *Virgin of the Meadow* [Fig. 164], painted around 1505 and now in the National Gallery of London, in which Bellini has removed the cloth of honour behind the Virgin and the foreground marble parapet, both typical of his Virgin and Child paintings in a vertical format. By the early 1510s, Bellini consistently added saints into spacious compositions in a horizontal format, in which all the figures are depicted half-length, and the cloth of honour behind the Virgin and the foreground ledge reappear occasionally.¹⁰⁵ In total, Bellini painted the naked Christ Child in twenty-one out of around fifty-four devotional images of the Virgin and Child, while Cima depicted the naked Christ Child in twenty-four out of around thirty-eight Virgin and Child paintings in a horizontal and vertical format. More precisely, Cima painted the baby Jesus' genitals in sixteen out of around twenty-seven Virgin and Child paintings in a vertical format, and in eight out of eleven works in a horizontal

¹⁰⁴ For further reference to the figures provided above, see Goffen (1989), pp. 23-66; Tempestini (1999), pp. 192-233; *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion* (2004), pp. 7-127; *Giovanni Bellini* (2008), pp. 132-322; Villa (2008), pp. 244-257.

¹⁰⁵ Humfrey (2006), pp. 58, 61.

format.¹⁰⁶

In conclusion, major devotional painters such as Montagna, Bellini and Cima endowed their Virgin and Child paintings with a number of devotional aids aimed at inspiring devotion. Details such as the nudity of the Christ Child and the praying hands of the Virgin testify to devotional artists' attempt to make their works suited to the new wave of spirituality experienced in the private sphere.

¹⁰⁶ My data comes from analysis of the works in the catalogue of autograph works by Cima and his shop in Humfrey (1983), pp. 77-173; Francescutti (2010), pp. 43-49; Villa et al. (2010), pp. 92-185.

2.4 Seriality in Montagna's Workshop

This section focuses on the techniques and marketing strategies characterising the serial production of Virgin and Child paintings in Montagna's workshop.

This type of devotional imagery was particularly easy to produce serially, as the Florentine painter Neri di Bicci realised by the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁰⁷ Painting on a small support meant that there was less pictorial material to use and fewer figures to depict, which enabled the painter to reduce production costs and the time of execution of the work. Moreover, unlike altarpieces, the small dimensions and lightness of these works made them particularly easy to move and display within a domestic setting, two practical aspects which must have contributed to the popularity of this genre. All these elements acted in the service of an effective serial production, as they represented a convenient shortcut to the open market for the painter¹⁰⁸ and an affordable good for the ordinary devotee.¹⁰⁹

The paramount importance of the shift to more advanced techniques, such as the *a secco* fresco technique and oil paints, and supports, such as canvas in place of panel, has been highlighted as a means of lowering the costs of production and speeding up the painting process.¹¹⁰ It is for such reasons that in both large-scale and small-scale works Montagna fully exploited the use of

¹⁰⁷ Louisa C. Matthew, 'Creative Dealing: Painters Marketing Paintings in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Florence and Venice,' in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe*, eds Neil De Marchi and Hans J. van Miegroet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), p. 319.

¹⁰⁸ Bambach (1999), p. 101.

¹⁰⁹ Morse (2006), pp. 66-67, 115-116.

¹¹⁰ See, in particular, Richard A. Goldthwaite, 'Economic Parameters of the Italian Art Market (15th to 17th Centuries),' in *The Art Market in Italy (15th-17th Centuries)* (2003), p. 427.

tempera grassa, which consists in mixing drying oil with egg tempera.¹¹¹ Yet he painted his Virgin and Child paintings mainly on panel rather than canvas. The only exception is his latest small-size devotional picture known to us, *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist* now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza [inventory n. A 7; Fig. 165], painted on canvas around 1520 in collaboration with his son and workshop assistant Benedetto Montagna. Oddly, Montagna had painted his large-scale altarpieces on canvas from the very beginning of his career, as he did between 1475 and 1480, when he executed his first known altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts George and Benedict* for the parish church of Sorio di Gambellara, near Vicenza [Fig. 117, 155 x 185 cm]. He also painted some of his most important altarpieces on canvas, such as the *Squarzi Altarpiece* [Fig. 5, 410 x 260 cm] and the Monte Berico *Pietà* [Fig. 26, 232 x 248 cm]. Even so, as in the case of small devotional pictures, Montagna remained largely committed to the use of panel for his large-scale works. Overall, in his production of Virgin and Child paintings, he must have principally benefited from the use of the tempera-on-panel technique, particularly from the relatively rapid execution guaranteed by the swift drying of the oil in the *tempera grassa*.¹¹²

In Vicenza Montagna was responsible for the planning and supervision of the assembly-line production of devotional paintings issuing from his workshop, as much as Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano were in their

¹¹¹ For a detailed definition of the *tempera grassa* technique, see Jill Dunkerton, 'Modifications to Traditional Egg Tempera Techniques in Fifteenth-Century Italy,' in *Early Italian Paintings: Techniques and Analysis*, eds Tonnie Bakkenist, René Hoppenbrouwers and Hélène Dubois (Maastricht: Limburg Conservation Institute, 1997), p. 31. On Montagna's use of the *tempera grassa* technique, see also Ann Ruggles, 'Towards an Understanding of Change: The Materials and Techniques of *St. Jerome in Penitence* by Bartolomeo Montagna,' *National Gallery of Canada Review* 3 (2002), p. 153.

¹¹² Jill Dunkerton, 'Bellini's Technique,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*, ed. Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 211.

Venetian *botteghe*. This type of workshop organisation brought about a systematic replication of designs by dint of highly consolidated artistic methods. Seriality on a production-line basis hinged on the use of cartoons, that is, large-scale preparatory drawings, usually in a highly finished state, which were employed to transfer the design to the final painting. The reuse of cartoons in the workshops of Venetian Renaissance artists as tools of a precise marketing strategy aimed at meeting the purchaser's demand has long been discussed.¹¹³ Indeed, cartoons enabled artists to achieve a homogeneous output by reproducing designs with or without variations. The use of mechanical aids also guaranteed speed of execution, a key factor for artists who intended to carry out an effective and competitive serial production.

In particular, there were two techniques used by artists for design replication in Renaissance Italy: the *spolvero* technique and stylus tracing. The former, also called “pouncing” or “dusting”, consists in either pricking a drawing's contours for the transfer of the design onto another surface, or in making a drawing freehand by linking the dots of the preliminary pricked outlines.¹¹⁴ Stylus tracing, also called “calco” or “ricalco” and conducted by means of a pen-shaped tool, entails either a style-traced cartoon with soft incisions, or incisions done without use of cartoons, that is to say, made directly onto the working surface, which could be an easel or mural painting.¹¹⁵ The *spolvero* technique was first used in Italy around 1340 and remained a common means of design replication until about 1550. During the fifteenth century, if central-Italian artists used punched cartoons mainly for an

¹¹³ Maria Clelia Galassi, ‘La produzione seriale nella bottega di Giovanni Bellini: indagini sulle due Madonne del Museo di Castelveccchio,’ *Verona illustrata* 11 (1998), p. 5.

¹¹⁴ Bambach (1999), p. 13.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 335.

exploratory purpose, with a view to perfecting the design of figural compositions,¹¹⁶ artists from northern Italy used cartoons for replicating common types such as the Virgin and Child. Venetian artists, in particular, resorted to *spolvero* cartoons mainly for reproducing either entire compositions or individual motifs.¹¹⁷ The presence of pouncing marks has been detected in some parts of Bellini's *Pesaro Altarpiece* [Fig. 51],¹¹⁸ and many Virgin and Child paintings ascribed to the master, his workshop or his school may have been created with the aid of cartoons. For instance, through infrared reflectography examinations, it has been possible to detect *spolvero* dots on the underdrawings of Bellini's *Virgin and Child* in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, and the Hague *Virgin and Child*, which can probably be ascribed to the school of the master [Figs 166-167]. The presence of traces of *spolvero* suggests the use of pricked cartoons for the execution of both works.¹¹⁹ Infrared reflectography examinations have also enabled the detection of traces of *spolvero* in a *Virgin and Child* now in the Bonnefanten Museum of Maastricht [Fig. 168], painted between 1490 and 1495 by Pasqualino Veneto, probably a pupil or assistant of Cima da Conegliano.¹²⁰ The figural group is almost an exact replica of two copies of a lost *Virgin and Child in a Landscape* by Giovanni Bellini, both ascribed by Anchise Tempestini to Bellini's workshop. The first copy was painted around 1485 and is now in The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art of Kansas City, and the second copy was made around 1490-1500 and is now in

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 12, 17, 101.

¹¹⁷ As noted by Andrea Golden, 'Creating and Re-creating: The Practice of Replication in the Workshop of Giovanni Bellini,' in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion* (2004), p. 108.

¹¹⁸ Carla Bertorello and Giovanna Martellotti, 'Per una lettura critica dei dati tecnici,' in *La pala ricostituita: l'Incoronazione della Vergine e la cimasa vaticana di Giovanni Bellini. Indagini e restauri*, ed. Maria Rosaria Valazzi (Venice: Cataloghi Marsilio, 1988), p. 88.

¹¹⁹ Hendrik Willem van Os (ed.), *The Early Venetian Paintings in Holland* (Maarssen: Gary Schwartz, 1978), pp. 29-51.

¹²⁰ Rodolfo Pallucchini, 'Giunte al catalogo di Pasqualino Veneto,' *Arte veneta* 11 (1957), pp. 199-200; Lionello Puppi, 'Per Pasqualino Veneto,' *Critica d'arte* 44 (1961), pp. 36-47; Rodolfo Pallucchini, 'Un'altra aggiunta a Pasqualino Veneto,' *Storia dell'arte* 39-40 (1980), pp. 215-217.

the National Gallery of Art of Washington [Figs 169-170].¹²¹ In light of this, Andrea Golden has proposed that the three aforementioned works were created from cartoons.¹²²

By means of infrared reflectography examinations, it has been possible to detect the use of the *spolvero* and tracing techniques for design transfer and replication in a few works by Montagna. For instance, *spolvero* dots along the contours of the Virgin's hands have been identified in Montagna's *Virgin and the Seated Child*, painted around 1480 and now in the Museo Civico of Belluno [inventory n. 691; Fig. 171]. Maria Clelia Galassi has hypothesised the use of tracing in this painting on account of the stiffness of the underdrawing's outlines.¹²³ The stiffness of contours and lack of *pentimenti* in the underdrawing revealed by infrared photographs has led scholars to hypothesise the use of cartoons for design transfer in two of Montagna's paintings of the *Virgin and Child* now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza [Figs 146, 150].¹²⁴ Design transfer with the aid of a cartoon has also been hypothesised for one of the master's paintings of the *Virgin and Child* [inventory n. 802; Fig. 172] now in the National Gallery of London.¹²⁵

One of Montagna's most replicated designs is that of the aforementioned Cardiff *Madonna* [Fig. 144]. There are four extant copies of this painting, two of which deserve particular attention as they allow us to appreciate the function of seriality in Montagna's workshop. The first copy is a

¹²¹ According to Anchise Tempestini, the painting in Kansas City is a workshop copy of a lost original by Giovanni Bellini. On this, see Anchise Tempestini, 'I collaboratori di Giovanni Bellini,' *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 33 (2009), pp. 27-28.

¹²² Golden (2004), p. 103.

¹²³ Maria Clelia Galassi, 'Indagini sul disegno sottostante di Bartolomeo Montagna,' *Arte veneta* 55 (1999), p. 108.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 108; Maria Elisa Avagnina, Margaret Binotto and Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, *Pinacoteca civica di Vicenza: catalogo scientifico delle collezioni/1 dipinti dal XIV al XVI secolo* (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana, 2003), pp. 522, 547; Villa in Lucco (2014), pp. 297-298, 366.

¹²⁵ Villa in Lucco (2014), p. 294.

Virgin Adoring the Child now in the Museo Davia Bargellini of Bologna, probably painted between 1520 and 1525 and tentatively attributed by Lucco to Giovanni Speranza [Fig. 173]. The second copy is a *Virgin Adoring the Child* now in the Pinacoteca Vaticana of Rome, arguably painted in the years 1520-1525 and tentatively ascribed by Lucco to Benedetto Montagna, Bartolomeo Montagna's son [Fig. 174]. Lucco has conjectured that Benedetto assisted Bartolomeo in the workshop during the last six years of his father's life.¹²⁶ The role of Benedetto as a workshop assistant in the *bottega* of his ageing father has long been discussed.¹²⁷ In a recent study, notably concerned with the reconstruction of Benedetto's activity as an engraver inspired by his father's paintings, it has been argued that he took charge of the shop after Bartolomeo's death.¹²⁸ As regards Benedetto's copy in the Pinacoteca Vaticana, Lucco has corroborated his attribution by highlighting the close resemblance of some details, such as the angular folds of the Virgin's drapery and the plump faces of the Virgin and Child, to those in Benedetto's altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Peter, Francis of Assisi, Paul and Anthony of Padua*, now in the Pinacoteca di Brera of Milan [Fig. 175]. This altarpiece was painted in 1528, only a few years after the execution of the *Virgin Adoring the Child* in the Pinacoteca Vaticana. The latter, according to Lucco, is characterised by an uncertain pictorial manner which is noticeable in the flat depiction of the figures, unlike the life-like appearance of the figures in Bartolomeo Montagna's Cardiff panel [Fig. 144].¹²⁹ A hesitant pictorial idiom is often found in

¹²⁶ Lucco (2014), p. 422.

¹²⁷ Puppi (1962), p. 71.

¹²⁸ Federica Morello, 'I Montagna e la prima grande scuola vicentina,' in *Benedetto e Bartolomeo Montagna e i grandi maestri dell'incisione europea del Cinquecento* (exhibition catalogue, Villa Caldogno, Vicenza, 24 April 2004 – 30 May 2004), ed. Federica Morello (Veggiano: Art Media, 2004), p. 36.

¹²⁹ Lucco (2014), p. 422.

workshop replicas of private devotional paintings. Yet more emphasis needs to be placed on the alterations of the original design characterising copies produced by the master or his workshop assistants. On closer inspection, one notices that in both copies of Montagna's Cardiff painting, there are minor variations in the position of the Christ Child's arms. While in Montagna's original the infant Christ raises both his arms towards his mother in search of physical contact, in the panel of the Pinacoteca Vaticana one arm of the Christ Child rests on his left thigh whereas the other holds a goldfinch [Fig. 174]. In the other workshop copy now in Bologna, the Christ Child's left arm is shown in the same position as that of the Christ Child depicted in the painting of the Pinacoteca Vaticana, while his right arm seems almost identical to that of the infant Christ in the master's original [Figs 144, 173]. These are essentially minor alterations of the figures in Montagna's painting in Cardiff, especially in comparison to the more noticeable modifications of the background depicted by the master. It is no accident that, in both copies, evident changes can be seen in the background, as such details were usually not included in cartoons utilised in Renaissance workshops for the preservation and transfer of the original's design in successive reproductions.¹³⁰

Three more examples of replication of the Virgin and Child group by means of pricked cartoons are the aforementioned copies of a lost *Virgin and Child* by Giovanni Bellini, two of them ascribed to his workshop and the other to Pasqualino Veneto [Figs 168-170].¹³¹ These works show the same figural group, while the views in their backgrounds are different. Indeed, the hilly landscape with fortress in the Kansas City and Washington versions are not identical, and the tree in the latter does not feature in the former. On the other

¹³⁰ Bambach (1999), p. 100.

¹³¹ For further discussion on these works, see Golden (2004), p. 103.

hand, the view of a town partly hidden by a red curtain hanging behind the Virgin in Pasqualino's work does not appear in Bellini's workshop copies. The relationship between these paintings is comparable to that between Bartolomeo Montagna's Cardiff *Virgin Adoring the Child* and its copy by Benedetto Montagna, the *Virgin and Child* in the Pinacoteca Vaticana [Figs 144, 174]. The copies by Pasqualino Veneto, Giovanni Bellini's workshop and Benedetto Montagna help illustrate the degree to which variation from the model was aimed at de-personalising replicas in response to the art market demand.¹³² The introduction of some variations on the original design was part of a marketing strategy that Bartolomeo Montagna must have learned in Giovanni Bellini's workshop. Bellini and his workshop collaborators were indeed capable of continuously varying the poses of the figures in their devotional paintings, according to a procedure that commanded subtle changes to the original design in response to the art market demand.¹³³ The making of copies in Montagna's workshop through the repetition of or slight variations on a pre-existing design must have been regarded as a creative and modern process, which reveals how these replicas were primarily thought of as marketable objects. The practice of varying replicas with a view to making them more appealing and increasing their saleability is mentioned by Lotto in his *Libro di spese diverse*.¹³⁴ The same market-determined choice of mechanical techniques and repetition and modification of motifs and compositional formulas are characteristic of the workshop strategies of Perugino and

¹³² For further discussion on the practice of 'de-personalising' replicas, see Miguel Falomir, 'Titian's Replicas and Variants,' in *Titian* (exhibition catalogue, National Gallery, London, 19 February 2003 – 18 May 2003), ed. David Jaffé (London: National Gallery, 2003), p. 66.

¹³³ Luigi Coletti, *Cima da Conegliano* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1959), pp. 37-38; Golden (2004), p. 93.

¹³⁴ Lorenzo Lotto, *Libro di spese diverse*, eds Floriano Grimaldi and Katy Sordi (Loreto: Delegazione pontificia per il Santuario della Santa Casa di Loreto, 2003), p. 88 fol. 59v; Matthew (2006), p. 313.

Botticelli.¹³⁵ A number of paintings of *The Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist* ascribed to Botticelli's workshop, which derive from Botticelli's *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist*, painted between 1465 and 1470 and now in the Louvre [Fig. 176], are clear examples of modification of the master's original design: a *Virgin and Child with an Angel* (*Madonna della loggia*), painted in the 1470s and now in the Norton Simon Museum of Pasadena [Fig. 177]; and a group of almost identical paintings of the *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist*, painted in the 1480s and now in the Städel Museum of Frankfurt, the Gemäldegalerie of Dresden, and the Museo di Palazzo Vecchio in Florence [Figs 178-180]. Three more workshop paintings, in which the figure of St John the Baptist is omitted, are to be included in this series: *The Virgin and Child* now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford [Fig. 181]; and two *Virgin and Child* paintings now in the National Gallery of London and the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Lille, which almost replicate the design of the Oxford version [Figs 182-183].¹³⁶

Nevertheless, the making of copies in Montagna's workshop did not always bring about alterations of the original design. For instance, a lost workshop replica, dated 1505-1510 and formerly in the De Noailles collection in Paris, is an exact copy of Montagna's paintings of the *Virgin and Child* now in Amsterdam and Modena [Figs 184-186].¹³⁷ As in the case of the Amsterdam

¹³⁵ Hans Körner, *Botticelli* (Köln: DuMont, 2006), pp. 290-310; O'Malley (2013), pp. 200-201, 204; Robert Williams, 'Repetition, Variation, and the Idea of Art in Renaissance Italy,' *California Italian Studies* 6:1 (2016), pp. 3, 5.

¹³⁶ Ronald William Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 2 vols (London: Paul Elek, 1978), vol. 2, pp. 126-127; Rudolf Hiller von Gaertringen, *Italianische Gemälde im Städel, 1300-1550: Toskana und Umbrien* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 2004), pp. 348-349; Körner (2006), pp. 290-310; O'Malley (2013), pp. 200-201, 204.

¹³⁷ There is an extensive literature on this painting: Borenius (1909), p. 52; Lionello Venturi, 'Saggio sulle opere d'arte italiana a Pietroburgo,' *L'arte* 15 (1912), p. 134; Tancred Borenius, 'Italian Pictures in the Rijksmuseum,' *The Burlington Magazine* 59 (1931), p. 71; Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance. Venetian School* (London: Phaidon Press, 1957), p. 116; Puppi (1962), pp. 120-121; Id. (1963), p. 393; Id., 'Qualche novità montagnesca,' *Emporium* 139

and Modena versions, the Paris copy is signed “OPUS BARTOLO[...] MONTAGNA DIE/XIII APRILI” on the painted parapet. The presence of the master’s signature on a painting that is considered a workshop replica is not surprising, since in the eyes of whoever commissioned or purchased these paintings, the signature was less a guarantee of authorship than a trademark of the workshop. In other words, as Miguel Falomir has explained in his study on replicas and variants in Titian’s workshop, Renaissance clients were usually aware that replicas bearing the signature of the head of the workshop were not necessarily or entirely by the hand of the master himself.¹³⁸

The success of Montagna’s devotional images is to be measured against the numerous Madonna designs replicated in his workshop or simply used as reference material in the creation of workshop variants. In the output of Giovanni Bellini’s workshop, five sets of Madonnas by the hand of the master and/or his assistants have long been identified.¹³⁹ As regards Montagna’s Virgin and Child paintings, six Madonna designs are replicated in exact copies or variants ascribed to the master’s main assistants, his son Benedetto and Giovanni Speranza. The Madonna design of the *Virgin and Child* now in Williamstown reappears in Giovanni Speranza’s *The Virgin and Child with St Joseph and the Infant St John the Baptist*, now in the Museo Civico Amedeo Lia of La Spezia and dated around 1505 [Figs 149, 187].¹⁴⁰ The second Madonna design, the *Virgin Adoring the Child* in the Pinacoteca of the Castello Sforzesco in Milan painted between 1480 and 1485, might have been used as reference

(1964), pp. 198, 203; Kai Uwe Nielsen, ‘Bartolomeo Montagna und die venetianische Malerei des späten Quattrocento,’ P.h.D. thesis (Ludwig-Maximilians Universität 1995), p. 146; Lucco (2014), p. 404.

¹³⁸ Falomir (2003), pp. 67-68.

¹³⁹ Felton Gibbons, ‘Practices in Giovanni Bellini’s Workshop,’ *Pantheon* 23 (1965), p. 147.

¹⁴⁰ Lucco (2014), p. 408. As stressed by Lucco, Giovanni Speranza might have been inspired also by the design of Montagna’s *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* in Strasbourg [Fig. 143].

material for a lost *Virgin and Child* made between 1515 and 1520, and tentatively attributed to Benedetto Montagna by Lucco [Figs 188-189].¹⁴¹ The praying Virgin in the *Virgin Adoring the Child* formerly in the collection of Guido Carminati, also tentatively ascribed by Lucco to Benedetto Montagna, is a near faithful copy of the third Madonna design in Montagna's *Adoration of the Child* now in the parish church of Orgiano [Figs 19, 190].¹⁴² An exact workshop copy of the fourth Madonna design now in Amsterdam and Modena is the aforementioned lost painting formerly in the De Noailles collection in Paris [Figs 184-186].¹⁴³ The fifth Madonna design of the Pavia and Courtauld *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* must have been the model of a lost copy, the *Virgin Adoring the Child* held in the Galleria Pietro Scarpa in Venice until 1985 [Figs 142, 151, 191].¹⁴⁴ The last Madonna design of the *Virgin Adoring the Child* now in Cardiff is replicated in the workshop copy of the Pinacoteca Vaticana, which Lucco has attributed to Benedetto Montagna [Figs 144, 174].¹⁴⁵

In order to understand to what extent Montagna's Madonna designs were used as reference material, it is essential to clarify some characteristics of workshop copies made by Venetian painters between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Miguel Falomir has argued that the copyist could include or eliminate figures or objects in the original, thus concluding that replicas issuing from Titian's workshop "[...] were never exact reproductions of the

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 399. Lucco has pointed out that the Madonna of this workshop copy recalls the Madonna depicted in Bartolomeo and Benedetto Montagna's *Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist*, now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza [inventory n. A 7; Fig. 165]. This comparison is persuasive only to some extent, in that only the heads of the two Madonnas, both in the shape and inclination of the face, are similar to one another. The Madonna in the copy by Benedetto Montagna (?) is, in my opinion, closer to Bartolomeo Montagna's *Virgin and Child* now in the Pinacoteca of the Castello Sforzesco in Milan [Figs 188-189]. Indeed, in both works, not only the shape and inclination of the faces of the two Madonnas, but also the position of their arms and hands, and the shape of their hands, are similar to one another.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 400.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 404.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 405.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 422.

original painting [...].”¹⁴⁶ Falomir’s observation applies to the copy of Montagna’s Pavia *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* formerly in the Galleria Pietro Scarpa in Venice [Figs 151, 191]. The copy, painted around 1550, is similar yet not identical to the Pavia version. Unlike the other copy of the Pavia painting now in the Courtauld Galleries [Fig. 142], which is an exact replica, in the copy formerly in the Galleria Scarpa there are several variations on the original design, especially the absence of St Joseph. The nearly identical replication of the group of the Virgin and Child points to the copyist’s possible use of partial cartoons, either pounced or stylus-incised, used for the Courtauld version. In comparison to the Pavia painting, minor variations in the copy formerly in the Galleria Scarpa are noticeable in the lower marble block on which the Christ Child’s arm rests, the half-closed eyes of the baby Jesus, who is asleep in Montagna’s original, and in the depiction of the folds of the Child’s garment. These variations, which are noticeable also in the landscape in the background, are not surprising. Indeed, as argued by Falomir for Titian’s replicas, some changes, for instance in the position of the figures, could be made by the copyist or the author of the original himself after the design transfer.¹⁴⁷ Such modifications of the original design could be made freehand either on the underdrawing or directly onto the painted surface.

Even when a workshop copy appears to be a precise replica, it would be interesting to ascertain if the dimensions of these works coincide. This has recently been attempted by Alexander Röstel and Jae Youn Chung by taking a tracing of the Courtauld *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* and placing it on top of the Pavia *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* [Figs 142, 151]. The two outlines did not match perfectly, since the Courtauld painting is larger by 6.2 cm in height

¹⁴⁶ Falomir (2003), pp. 64, 66.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

and 6.5 cm in width than the Pavian version. Yet the contours of the individual figures almost coincided. As Röstel and Chung have pointed out, this may evidence the use of reference material and mechanical aids, such as partial cartoons, in Montagna's workshop.¹⁴⁸ It must be stressed that partial cartoons could be recycled or made anew so as to re-proportion existing designs of a single figure or group of figures, according to a key practice in Renaissance workshops that catered to demand.¹⁴⁹ This practice is argued with respect to Montagna's Amsterdam and Modena *Virgin and Child* and a lost copy formerly in the De Noailles collection [Figs 184-186]. In comparison to Montagna's version in Amsterdam, the De Noailles *Virgin and Child* is smaller by 4.2 cm in height and larger by 1.8 cm in width, while it is smaller than the Modena *Virgin and Child* by 6 cm in height and 1.5 cm in width. Therefore, since the measurements of the De Noailles *Virgin and Child* do not coincide with the dimensions of its prototypes, it may be worthwhile to conduct an experiment such as that carried out by Röstel and Chung. Indeed, by preparing a tracing of the De Noailles *Virgin and Child* and placing it on top of the Amsterdam and Modena *Virgin and Child*, it would be possible to verify to what extent the outlines overlap and if partial cartoons were used to replicate or re-proportion the original design.¹⁵⁰

Unfortunately, a large number of *Virgin and Child* pictures by Montagna or his workshop assistants have not been subjected to modern technical analysis, such as infra-red reflectography examinations, which could help

¹⁴⁸ Röstel & Chung (2015), p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ As argued in Michelle O'Malley, 'Quality, Demand, and the Pressures of Reputation: Rethinking Perugino,' *The Art Bulletin* 89:4 (2007), p. 677.

¹⁵⁰ In regard to this, infrared reflectography examinations may reveal the transfer methods employed in the execution of these paintings, given their almost identical dimensions. The same point has been made by Carmen Bambach with regards to the *Virgin and Child* paintings produced in the workshop of Cima da Conegliano. For further reference to this point, see Bambach (1999), p. 101.

ascertain if the design was transferred by means of tracing or pouncing. It would also enable us to verify if the painter used partial pricked drawings, and to detect the presence of contour lines drawn freehand or *pentimenti* both in the underdrawing and painted areas.¹⁵¹

In conclusion, in this section I have shed light on the relationship between an original and its copies in Montagna's workshop, in which the use of mechanical aids was instrumental in guaranteeing a homogenous and competitive workshop output. The presence of *spolvero* dots and tracing, which infrared reflectography examinations have revealed in some devotional paintings by Montagna, suggest that cartoons were used in his workshop for reference and for streamlining workshop production. I have also demonstrated that, as in the case of replicas ascribed to Titian's workshop, copies of Montagna's paintings made by workshop assistants sometimes contain minor changes to the original design. This procedure allowed the painter to have some leeway to rework some details after the design transfer while preserving the original compositional formula. The numerous copies of Montagna's Virgin and Child paintings testify to the influence of this type of devotional imagery on his assistants, whose replicas certainly contributed to making the Madonna design a marketable workshop trademark.

¹⁵¹ For a discussion on Montagna's pictorial technique subjected to modern technical analysis, see Ruggles (2002), pp. 145-159.

2.5 Paintings Made for the Open Market in Montagna's Workshop

This section looks at the peculiarities of private devotional pictures in Montagna's workshop likely destined for the market rather than a commissioner.

A painting made for the open market was a work created by the artist prior to engagement with a buyer in anticipation of receiving payment for it. The possibility for artists and artisans to anticipate potential buyers' requests has long been discussed in the literature. In her survey of marketing strategies in late fifteenth-century Florentine art, Rita Comanducci has argued that only those goldsmiths who could afford to pay for precious stones and metals could proceed to make works of art. By contrast, goldsmiths who lacked financial resources were forced to wait for a buyer to supply them with the necessary budget for the purchase of production material.¹⁵² Artists who painted for speculative sale bore the risk of not selling their works and losing the money anticipated for purchasing production material and all the necessary paraphernalia to complete the work. Interestingly, in her study of the business strategy of Neri di Bicci's workshop, Comanducci has stressed the disadvantages associated with the artist's production of non-commissioned "colmi da camera," small private devotional paintings placed in an architectural tabernacle frame [Fig. 192]. By highlighting the commercial success of Neri's ready-made "colmi," Comanducci has argued that the artist must have accurately calculated the possibility of incurring a loss by ensuring that he

¹⁵² Rita Comanducci, "Buono artista della sua arte." Il concetto di "artista" e la pratica di lavoro nella bottega quattrocentesca,' in *Arti fiorentine. La grande storia dell'artigianato*, eds Franco Franceschi and Gloria Foschi, 6 vols (Florence: Giunti, 1999), vol. 2, p. 160.

would sell all his works and retrieve the money anticipated from the prospective buyer.¹⁵³

The anticipation of money and calculation of the financial risks taken by painting works for speculative sale must have been two aspects with which Montagna was rather familiar. Montagna's purchases of real estate, notably during his investment spree in the last two decades of the Quattrocento, often consisted in interest-bearing purchase and leaseback loans made and formalised through an agricultural contract called *livello*.¹⁵⁴ According to Brian Pullan, "the *livello* was in effect a personal loan disguised as a lease of real property for the purpose of circumventing the laws against usury. To take an imaginary example: the borrower, A, wishing to raise a loan of 5,000 ducats from the lender, B, would fictitiously sell certain property to B, and receive the 5,000 ducats in exchange. B would then fictitiously lease him the property he had sold, in return for an annual rent corresponding to a certain percentage of the 5,000 ducats."¹⁵⁵ In broad terms, whenever the painter came into possession of land through the *livello*, he essentially supplied a needy person with ready cash. The extension of credit to a person in economic difficulty meant that the artist had to consider the possibility of not being able to regain the money anticipated. Nevertheless, Montagna must have carefully weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of buying and leasing land back to the person who had previously sold him that property. In some cases he must eventually have benefited from the cost-effective nature of the *livello*, as the rentee was obliged to pay the artist a land rent in cash or kind until he

¹⁵³ Comanducci (2003), pp. 106-107.

¹⁵⁴ On the *livello*, see Gigi Corazzol, *Fitti e livelli a grano. Un aspetto del credito rurale nel Veneto del '500* (Milan: F. Angeli, 1979), pp. 15-16.

¹⁵⁵ Brian Pullan, 'The Occupations and Investments of the Venetian Nobility in the Middle and Late Sixteenth Century,' in *Renaissance Venice*, ed. John Rigby Hale (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), p. 388.

redeemed the property by paying Montagna the same sum initially received on loan. Similarly, whenever Montagna made devotional pictures of the Virgin and Child for speculative sale, he must have carefully gauged the possibility of selling these works (either in his workshop or at fairs), of recuperating the money spent to paint them, and of possibly making a surplus.

Venetian workshops' production of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century paintings made for the open market has not been thoroughly investigated. One of the first scholars who studied such works was Hans Tietze, who credited the Bassano workshop with the creation of biblical and genre paintings destined for the open market as opposed to a commissioner.¹⁵⁶ Francesco and Jacopo Bassano were not the only painters in Renaissance Veneto who painted replicas for speculative sale. In a letter addressed to a buyer in 1531, Lotto made clear that he intended to make copies of some of his paintings which would have been earmarked for the marketplace.¹⁵⁷ He also recorded in his *Libro* that, prior to leaving Venice in January 1547, he tasked one of his agents, the guilder Joan Maria de Lignago, with selling two versions of a *Virgin with a Sleeping Child*.¹⁵⁸

Production for speculative sale is widely documented in studies on the main Florentine workshops of the fifteenth century, run by Neri di Bicci and Bernardo Rosselli, for which records exist in the former's *Ricordanze* and the latter's *Book of Creditors and Debtors*.¹⁵⁹ In fact, it seems that artists painted panels

¹⁵⁶ Hans Tietze, 'Master and Workshop in the Venetian Renaissance,' *Parnassus* 11:8 (December 1939), p. 35. For a more recent discussion on the Bassano's production of paintings for the ready-made sector, see Enrico Maria Dal Pozzolo, 'Cercar quadri e disegni nella Venezia del Cinquecento,' in *Tra Committenza e collezionismo. Studi sul mercato dell'arte nell'Italia settentrionale durante l'età moderna*, eds Enrico Maria Dal Pozzolo and Leonida Tedoldi (Vicenza: Terra Ferma, 2003), p. 54; Matthew (2006), p. 324.

¹⁵⁷ Francesca Cortesi Bosco, *Il coro intarsiato di Lotto e Capoferri per Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo. Lettere e documenti* (Bergamo: Credito bergamasco; Silvana, 1987), p. 25 n. 36. See also Matthew (2006), p. 313.

¹⁵⁸ Lotto (2003), pp. 94-95 fols 62v-63.

¹⁵⁹ Neri di Bicci, *Le ricordanze (10 Marzo 1453 - 24 Aprile 1475)*, ed. Bruno Santi (Pisa: Marlin, 1976); ASF, Fondo Rosselli del Turco, n. 6: *Debitori e creditori di Bernardo di Stefano Rosselli*,

on speculation in central Italy as early as the 1250s and 1260s.¹⁶⁰ The implementation of this practice in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century central Italy is borne out by studies on the merchant of Prato Francesco Datini's trade in religious paintings. According to a "ricordanza" by Neri di Bicci, dated 29 February 1408, the carpenter Giovanni Martini had provided Datini with at least forty "tavoluze da dipingnere, chogli sportelli e piedistallo" for 8 *soldi* apiece. It can be inferred that Datini purchased a cheap stock of panels which he was to give to one or more artists to paint.¹⁶¹ In another *ricordanza* Neri di Bicci recorded that, on 19 February 1460, he ordered twelve "tabernacholi da chamera fatti al'antica" from the carpenter Luca Manucci, who worked with him on a regular basis.¹⁶² The order consisted of two sets of six tabernacles, both with stock pieces of the same size, which suggests that Neri was accustomed to making panels for speculative sale in his workshop. Annamaria Bernacchioni has called attention to the "thresholds," "windows" and "tiny walls" next to the entrance door, where the workshop output was displayed in Neri di Bicci's *bottega*.¹⁶³ The exploitation of window displays of goods to draw customers into their shops was common practice for painters in mid-fifteenth-century Bruges and Antwerp, where fairs on specific market days were also a

1500(1)-1512(13), n. 6, fol. 256s. See also Alessandro Guidotti, 'Pubblico e privato, committenza e clientela: botteghe e produzione artistica a Firenze tra XV e XVI secolo,' *Ricerche storiche* 16 (1986), pp. 544-550; Rita Comanducci, 'Produzione seriale e mercato dell'arte a Firenze tra Quattro e Cinquecento,' in *The Art Market in Italy (15th-17th Centuries)* (2003), pp. 106-107; Margherita Ciampaglia, 'Il libro di bottega segnato A di Bernardo di Stefano Rosselli (15 Giugno 1475 - 3 Marzo 1500). Pittura a Firenze nel secondo Quattrocento,' P.h.D. thesis (University of Roma Tre 2008).

¹⁶⁰ Victor Michael Schmidt, *Painted Piety: Panel Paintings for Personal Devotion in Tuscany, 1250-1400* (Florence: Centro di, 2005), p. 205.

¹⁶¹ Lapo Mazzei, *Lettere di un notaro a un mercante del secolo XIV con altre lettere e documenti*, ed. Cesare Guasti, 2 vols (Florence: Le Monnier, 1880), vol. 2, p. 415 note 3; Schmidt (2005), pp. 206, 208.

¹⁶² Neri di Bicci (1976), p. 137 n. 269; Schmidt (2005), p. 206.

¹⁶³ Bernacchioni (1992), p. 23.

convenient outlet for commodities.¹⁶⁴ Anabel Thomas has also recalled an interesting anecdote in Vasari's *Lives*, according to which Botticelli advised the painter Biagio d'Antonio to hang his works on the upper part of the workshop wall for the "walk-in" buyer to be able to see them easily. Thomas has therefore surmised that Botticelli's workshop had high ceilings, a detail which points to the exhibiting function of Renaissance masters' *botteghe*.¹⁶⁵ Vasari's tale¹⁶⁶ is significant inasmuch as it proves that, in the eyes of Botticelli, ready-made devotional images were primarily marketable objects, which could be sold more easily because the "walk-in" buyer was able to observe them comfortably in the shop. It is likely that, as argued for the sale of works of art in the artist's shop in late Quattrocento Flanders, the walk-in customer could either buy a ready-made painting or ask for a painting to be made according to one of the stock patterns available in the shop.¹⁶⁷ The latter case is particularly interesting, as it is an example of a commissioning process ensuing from a sale/purchase option guaranteed by the ready-made sector.

It is crucial to highlight that private devotional paintings aimed at the ready-made sector were executed according to standardised designs which could be suitable for a wide range of buyers.¹⁶⁸ As regards the selling process, the way in which these paintings were exhibited in the artist's workshop, such as lighting conditions and angle of vision, as well as the lure of the object itself,

¹⁶⁴ Peter Stabel, 'Selling Paintings in Late Medieval Bruges. Marketing Customs and Guild Regulations Compared,' in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe* (2006), p. 92.

¹⁶⁵ Thomas (1995), p. 38.

¹⁶⁶ Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, translated with an introduction and notes by Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 228: 'I finally sold that picture of yours, but this evening it would be good to hang it up high so that it can be seen better, and then, tomorrow morning, you should go to the buyer's house and bring him here—this way, he can see it displayed in the right light and the right place; then, he'll count out your money for you.'

¹⁶⁷ Elena Favaro, *L'arte dei pittori in Venezia e i suoi statuti* (Florence: Olschki, 1975), p. 70; Campbell (1976), pp. 194-195; Dal Pozzolo (2003), p. 52.

¹⁶⁸ Dal Pozzolo (2003), pp. 52-53.

must have carried for the artist no less weight than that carried for the customer by the manner and subject of the devotional image. The practice of making paintings for speculative sale thus allowed artists to meet the prospective buyer's financial, devotional and aesthetic needs. In order to guarantee the success of the selling process, artists had to plan an effective marketing strategy from the early stages of their creative process. In light of this, the aesthetic qualities and methods of display in the shop were no less decisive factors for their works made for the open market than the purchaser's needs and taste.

Private devotional paintings made in Renaissance Italy for speculative sale, according to Michelle O'Malley, were usually faithful copies of a prototype, while commissioned works for public religious sites were similar yet not identical to their prototypes.¹⁶⁹ In the case of Montagna's paintings of the Virgin and Child, it is somewhat challenging, not to say adventurous, to recognise works made for speculative sale. Nevertheless, it seems that domestic devotional pictures showing no signs of customisation are by the hand of a painter who worked on speculation. This category includes standardised pictures of the Virgin and Child in which additional figures, usually saints interceding with the Virgin and Child on behalf of the beholder, are absent. For instance, Montagna's *Virgin and Child* now in the Galleria Estense of Modena, painted around 1503 according to Lucco,¹⁷⁰ must have been executed on speculation, as it is an exact copy of his *Virgin and Child* now in the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam, probably painted between 1496 and 1503 [Figs 185-186]. The same can be argued with regards to another faithful copy of the

¹⁶⁹ Michelle O'Malley, *The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 223.

¹⁷⁰ Lucco (2014), pp. 341, 349-350.

Amsterdam panel, the *Virgin and Child* formerly in the De Noailles collection in Paris, which, again according to Lucco, bears the same signature and date as the Modenese version [Figs 184, 186]. Lionello Puppi has called attention to a version of the Amsterdam prototype, now in a private collection, signed by Giovanni Speranza, one of Montagna's pupils in Vicenza [Fig. 193].¹⁷¹ Since Speranza's picture is characterised by slight variations on the original design, that is to say a landscape in place of the dark background and the addition of St Joseph, one could conclude that this is a commissioned work. It should be taken into account that, whether he was commissioned to do a private devotional painting or made it for speculative sale, Montagna could draw on an array of stock designs that he kept in the shop for future reference. That is to say, a commissioned work might have resulted from the painter's combination of the commissioner's iconographic choice and a workshop pattern drawing. It is also possible that artists painted domestic devotional pictures for the open market and modified them at a later stage at the request of the "walk-in" buyer. For instance, Bartolomeo Vivarini's *The Virgin and Child with Sts Paul and Jerome*, now in the National Gallery of London and made in Venice in the 1460s, has been deemed a commissioned devotional picture in which the two saints behind the Virgin and Child were painted in at a second stage at the request of the buyer [Fig. 194].¹⁷² As regards Montagna's *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* now in the Museo Correr of Venice, Anne Margaret Morse has hypothesised that St Joseph was added later by the painter in response to the buyer's strong devotion to this holy figure or his desire to reinforce the moral message

¹⁷¹ Lionello Puppi, 'Schedula per Giovanni Speranza,' *Arte veneta* 27 (1973), pp. 254-255.

¹⁷² As suggested in Jill Dunkerton, Susan Foister, Dillian Gordon and Nicholas Penny, *Giotto to Dürer. Early Renaissance Painting in the National Gallery* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 69-70.

delivered by the picture [Fig. 145].¹⁷³ Morse therefore seems to imply that this was a ready-made picture subsequently customised in accordance with the spiritual longings of the purchaser. This suggestion is certainly intriguing, although it does not take the structure of the composition into consideration. More to the point, in the Correr *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* Montagna has depicted a close-knit group, in which the Christ Child's gesture functions as a link between the Virgin and St Joseph. This connection is further emphasised by the way in which the three figures gaze at one another. In light of this, I find it hard to believe that the figure of St Joseph was not included in the composition by the master from the outset. Conversely, in Speranza's aforementioned picture, the figure of St Joseph may well have been an afterthought, painted in later by the master so as to meet the buyer's demand [Fig. 193]. Upon closer inspection, in this composition neither the Christ Child nor his mother seems to be aware of the presence of St Joseph. This suggests that this work was probably made for speculative sale.

In Renaissance workshops, the use of cartoons for design replication must have been suitable for the practice of working on speculation. Indeed, we know that cartoons showed the group of the Virgin and Child, rarely flanked by saints, but normally did not include background details. A useful example is Raphael's pricked and stylus-incised cartoon, now in the British Museum, a preparatory work for his *Mackintosh Madonna* in the National Gallery of London [Figs 195-196]. Unlike this painting, in which the figures are set against a hilly landscape, in the cartoon Raphael depicted only the Madonna and Child, while omitting the background details. By means of these noncompositional devices, the master and his workshop assistants could repeat the group of the

¹⁷³ Morse (2006), pp. 70-71.

Virgin and Child in an unlimited number of pictorial versions of the same subject.¹⁷⁴ For instance, the holy figures in Giovanni Bellini's *Virgin and Child with Devotee*, probably painted in the early 1500s and now in the Alana collection of Newark (Delaware), are precisely replicated in three copies [Fig. 197]. The first copy was painted around 1502 by Bartolomeo Veneto, and was formerly in the Donà delle Rose collection in Venice [Fig. 198]. The second copy is ascribed to the circle of Bellini and appeared on the art market at a Christie's auction held in New York on 17 December 2006 (lot 217) [Fig. 199]. The last copy, attributed to Bellini's workshop, was probably in a private collection in Bergamo [Fig. 200]. All three copies show evident modifications to the background, but they do not include the figure of the devotee depicted in Bellini's original.¹⁷⁵ It is likely that Bellini created the composition by means of two different cartoons, one for the group of the Virgin and Child, which was clearly used by the copyists for transferring the design, and the other for the devotee. It is hard to say whether the latter was painted in by the master at a later stage or included in the composition from the beginning. On the other hand, it is not preposterous to surmise that the aforementioned copies of Bellini's painting were executed by workshop assistants who chose to replicate the group of the Virgin and Child only. By omitting the devotee, the copyist had the possibility of customising the work at a later stage at the request of a buyer, who could have tasked him with adding the figure of a saint or devotee to the composition for spiritual purposes. Admittedly, Bellini's copyists do not seem to have been interested in altering the balance of the master's version, which is reinforced through the depiction of the devotee engrossed in

¹⁷⁴ As noted by Bambach (1999), p. 100; and Golden (2004), p. 108.

¹⁷⁵ On Bellini's painting and its workshop copies, see Mauro Minardi, 'Una Madonna poco nota di Giovanni Bellini,' *Arte cristiana* 98 (2010), pp. 269-278.

contemplation of the Virgin and Christ Child, whose gazes are directed downward towards him. Hence, these replicas appear to have simply been de-personalised through minor variations in the background of the picture in order to make them more saleable.¹⁷⁶ For instance, in Bartolomeo Veneto's copy the curtain hanging behind the Virgin and Child in Bellini's panel has been replaced with an extensive landscape view, in which it is possible to recognise a river with a bridge and a tower on the right-hand side [Figs 197-198]. In light of this, these replicas might have been conceived as serial works aimed at the open market. It is plausible that some of these versions for the ready-made sector were created by means of stock figures of the Virgin and Child, which guaranteed speed of execution and accuracy in the transfer of a workshop design from one composition to another.

Both these aspects must have facilitated the making of copies for the open market in which the figure group appears faithfully or almost faithfully reproduced, as in the case of the two replicas of Montagna's Pavia *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* [Fig. 151]. One workshop copy of this painting, probably painted around 1520 and now in the Courtauld Galleries in London [Fig. 142], is identical to Montagna's original. In the other lost copy, painted around 1550 and formerly in the Galleria Pietro Scarpa, which is an almost exact replica of Montagna's work, the figure of St Joseph is missing [Fig. 191]. The nearly identical replication of the Virgin and Child group points to the copyist's possible use of the partial cartoons deployed for the execution of the Courtauld version. Yet it should not be ruled out that the copyist replicated the composition by taking the tracing from the finished painting or the underdrawing of either the Pavia or the Courtauld version.

¹⁷⁶ As suggested by Falomir with regards to Titian's replicas and variants. On this, see Falomir (2003), p. 66.

The same can be argued with reference to a *Virgin Adoring the Child* by Giovanni Speranza, signed on the lower left of the ledge, where one can read “Johanes Sperantia F V” [Fig. 201]. A date visible next to the full name of the painter seems to be “1521”, although one cannot be entirely certain due to the abrasion of the pictorial surface. Moreover, the signature “Marcus Basaitis pit” on the lower right of the parapet is probably not authentic.¹⁷⁷ The panel, sold at auction by Christie’s on 3 July 2013 (lot 181), is an almost identical replica by Speranza of his *The Virgin and Child with St Joseph and the Infant St John the Baptist* now in the Museo Civico Amedeo Lia of La Spezia, which must be regarded as the prototype since it was painted around 1505 [Fig. 187]. There are only minor divergences in size and composition between the two versions. In comparison to its prototype, the Christie’s version, measuring 42 x 33.9 cm, is larger by 6 cm in height and by 3.9 cm in width, and does not include St Joseph and the infant St John the Baptist. Besides, on the fictive stone surface of the ledge in the Christie’s panel, Speranza added an apple and a bird attached to a thread held by the Christ Child, and made the Virgin’s white headdress a little more elaborate. The absence of St Joseph and the infant St John the Baptist in this version is not surprising. As noted earlier, cartoons used in Renaissance workshops usually showed the Virgin and Child only, which the painter or his assistants could repeat in future paintings by transferring its design with the aid of a pricked drawing.¹⁷⁸ It might be for this reason that the figures of the Virgin and Child in the Christie’s panel are identical to those in the La Spezia panel, although this must remain hypothetical, owing to the dearth of information on these works. Alternatively, the design of the La Spezia panel might have been transferred by Speranza by

¹⁷⁷ As suggested in Lucco (2014), p. 408.

¹⁷⁸ Bambach (1999), p. 100. See also Golden (2004), p. 108.

means of tracing. If so, it would be hard to tell whether the tracing was taken from the La Spezia finished painting or from its underdrawing. The possible use of non-compositional devices by Speranza in these two panels suggests that both works might have been made for speculative sale and only later customised at the request of the purchaser. In the Christie's version, the presence of an apple and a bird on the foreground parapet could be indicative of the buyer's yearning to strengthen the spiritual message of the purchased work and interest in the allegorical symbolism of the objects depicted. Similarly, the addition in the La Spezia panel of John the Baptist, with his hands clasped in prayer, and Joseph, with his arms crossed on his chest, must have reinforced, in the eyes of the worshipper, the act of spiritual worship conveyed by the detail of the Virgin's praying hands. Interestingly, the gesture of Joseph recalls the gesture of the Virgin in Montagna's painting of the *Virgin Adoring the Child* now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York [Fig. 202]. On taking a closer look at the La Spezia panel, both the figures of the infant John the Baptist and Joseph seem to be afterthoughts, as once again the Virgin and Christ Child do not seem to notice their presence.¹⁷⁹ It thus seems unlikely that the panel is a commissioned work. By contrast, one gains a totally different impression in beholding the reproduction of a lost *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* by Giovanni Speranza, which has been dated by Puppi after 1503 on stylistic grounds [Fig. 203].¹⁸⁰ In this work, the gaze of the Christ Child is directed toward Joseph, whose hands clasped in prayer receive the blessing of

¹⁷⁹ A similar observation has been made by Mauro Minardi in regard to Giovanni Bellini's *Virgin and Child with Donor* now in Harewood Castle, Yorkshire. In particular, Minardi maintains that the donor appears to be somewhat out of context in the composition. For further reference, see Minardi (2010), pp. 271-272.

¹⁸⁰ Puppi (1963), p. 392.

the baby Jesus. In light of this, it is likely that the painter envisaged a composition including the saint from the very beginning.

It is worth pointing out that it is not always easy to assess whether the Virgin and Christ Child are conscious of the presence of a donor or saint squeezed into a corner of the composition in devotional paintings. A case in point is Palma Vecchio's *Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist and Donor*, painted around 1510 and now in the Szépmuvészeti Múzeum of Budapest [Fig. 204]. In this panel, which is in a horizontal rather than vertical format, the donor is confined to the bottom right corner of the composition, much like Andrea Previtali's *Virgin and Child with Donor* now in the Museo Civico of Padua [Fig. 205]. However, in Previtali's work the Virgin proves to be aware of the donor's presence by placing her left hand on his head, while in Palma's painting the Virgin and donor do not appear to be gazing at each other, as the former looks downward, outside the painting, in a pensive manner. Moreover, the donor does not appear to be aware of the playful interaction between the infant St John the Baptist and the baby Jesus, and his flat depiction gives the impression that the figure was painted in at a later stage by being superimposed onto the composition. However, in Palma's panel it is noticeable that, while the Virgin's right eye is directed downward outside the pictorial space in a pensive manner, her left eye seems to be oriented toward the donor. In other words, on closer inspection it appears that the Virgin does in fact notice the presence of the donor, who could therefore have been included in the composition from the start. This hypothesis is tenable, in that Palma probably balanced the composition by filling both sides of the picture field with figures depicted around the template of an equilateral triangle, according to a symmetrical solution typical of panels in a horizontal format.

In the case of Speranza's La Spezia panel [Fig. 187], the inclusion of Joseph might hint at the buyer's strong devotion to the saint, given the wide diffusion of the cult of St Joseph in northern Italy from the last quarter of the fifteenth century.¹⁸¹ The promulgation of Joseph's cult in Renaissance Italy began in 1479, when Pope Sixtus IV incorporated the saint's feast, celebrated on March 19, into the calendar of the Church.¹⁸² Later, in 1481 Joseph was canonised by Sixtus IV, as recorded by the Ferrarese diarist Bernardino Zambotti.¹⁸³ In fact, the augmentation of the liturgical role of St Joseph was fostered as early as the twelfth century by the Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux, who stressed the saint's Davidian lineage and pivotal role as the first witness of the Incarnation and first recipient of God's word.¹⁸⁴ In line with Bernard of Clairvaux's sponsorship of Joseph's cult, in his theological works the Franciscan Pietro di Giovanni Olivi depicted the saint as the spouse of the Church, representative of God and Christ, and as an ideal model for bishops and popes. In light of these virtues, Olivi argued that Joseph deserved to be worshipped by the thankful Church.¹⁸⁵ It must be noted that not only the Franciscans, but also the Carmelites, Benedictines, Servites, and Augustinians contributed to promoting the cult of St Joseph throughout the Trecento. Later, in the first half of the fifteenth century, the Franciscan preacher Bernardino of Siena, in sympathy with Olivi's thinking, praised the virtues of Joseph through his sermons. By the same token, Bernardino's followers, including the

¹⁸¹ On the origins and diffusion of the cult of St Joseph in Renaissance Italy, see Carolyn C. Wilson, *Saint Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art: New Directions and Interpretations* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2001).

¹⁸² Carolyn C. Wilson, 'The Cult of St. Joseph in Early Cinquecento Venice and the Testimony of Marino Sanudo's *Diaries*,' *Studi Veneziani* 47 (2004), p. 287.

¹⁸³ Bernardino Zambotti, *Diario ferrarese dall'anno 1476 sino al 1504*, ed. Giuseppe Pardi (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1934), p. 87.

¹⁸⁴ Wilson (2004), p. 290.

¹⁸⁵ For further reference on Olivi's description of Joseph's role and virtues, see Angelo Battiston, 'Le Patronage de Saint Joseph,' in *Actes du Congrès d'études tenu à l'Oratoire Saint-Joseph, Montréal, 19 août 1955* (Montreal: Fides, 1956), p. 50.

preachers Bernardino Tomitano of Feltre, Roberto Caracciolo of Lecce and Bernardino dei Busti, bolstered Joseph's cult in late Quattrocento northern Italy.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, the promotion of this cult was fostered in the sixteenth century by the Milanese Dominican Isidoro Isolani, whose *Summa de donis Sancti*, published in 1522 in Pavia, stands out as the first theological work entirely focused on the commendation of Joseph's sainthood.¹⁸⁷ Between the late 1470s and the publication of Isolani's *Summa*, a number of oratories, schools, confraternities and churches were dedicated to the saint in northern Italy. In the Veneto, a number of ecclesiastical institutions and churches were founded in St Joseph's name: an oratory in Zane, near Vicenza (1488); a church and community of Augustinian nuns in Verona (1493); a confraternity in Vicenza (1494); a church in Padua (around 1495); a confraternity in Venice (1499); a confraternity in Bassano del Grappa, near Vicenza (early 1500s); a confraternity and church in Belluno (1504 and 1507); a church in Venice, in the historical neighbourhood of Castello (1513); a confraternity in Conegliano, near Treviso (1510s); a confraternity in Cologna Veneta, between Verona and Vicenza (1520); and a church in Bassano del Grappa (1522).¹⁸⁸ Adverse circumstances, such as the outbreak of plague and the turmoil caused by the war of the League of Cambrai (1508-1516), have been regarded as factors that encouraged the cult of St Joseph and the creation of ecclesiastical institutions in his name in the Veneto. It has also been pointed out that some works of art were commissioned after the foundation of ecclesiastical institutions in

¹⁸⁶ Wilson (2004), pp. 291-292.

¹⁸⁷ See also Isidoro Isolani, *Somme des dons de saint Joseph*, ed. Giuseppe Antonio Patrignani, 2 vols (Avignon: Amédée Chaillot, 1861, first published 1522); Wilson (2001), pp. 8-9, 20, 75; Id., 'St. Joseph as Custos in the Summa of Isidoro Isolano and in Italian Renaissance Art,' in *Saint Joseph Studies: Papers in English from the Seventh and Eighth International St. Joseph Symposia Malta 1997 and El Salvador 2001*, ed. Larry Toschi (O.S.J. Santa Cruz, CA: Guardian of the Redeemer Books, 2002), pp. 89-120.

¹⁸⁸ Wilson (2004), pp. 297-298, 300-301.

Joseph's name. For instance, Carolyn Wilson has proposed that Montagna's *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece* was commissioned after a confraternity was founded in Cologna Veneta in 1520 [Fig. 25]. Wilson has linked the presence of Joseph, along with Sts Sebastian and Roch, in this altarpiece to the local community's plea for protection against plague.¹⁸⁹

Montagna depicted St Joseph in ten works, four of which are small-format paintings for domestic devotion.¹⁹⁰ In order to gain a better insight into the aggrandisement of St Joseph's pictorial role as it relates to the artist's devotional pictures, as well as his church altarpieces, it is necessary to take into account the historical context in which these works were created. Montagna first painted St Joseph in the lost *Adoration of the Child with Saints and the Donor Pietro* frescoed in 1495-1496 in the Proti Chapel of Vicenza's cathedral [Fig. 15]. The presence of Joseph in the composition must be associated with the growing cult of the saint in Vicenza, as proven by the local confraternity in his name founded in 1494 at the request of Bernardino of Feltre. Around the same time, the Zoga Chapel in the cathedral of Vicenza was rededicated to St Joseph.¹⁹¹ On the other hand, Montagna's late pictures showing the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*, such as those now in the Musée de Beaux-Arts at Strasbourg and the Museo Correr in Venice, are linked to historical events as well as religious factors [Figs 143, 145]. All these pictures were indeed painted

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 288, 297; Id., 'Lorenzo Lotto and the Pictorial Crafting of St. Joseph as a Figure of Cult,' in *Lorenzo Lotto e le Marche: per una geografia dell'anima* (2009), p. 127.

¹⁹⁰ Here is the list of Montagna's paintings in which Joseph is depicted: *The Adoration of the Child with Saints and the Donor Pietro* (1495-96), a lost fresco formerly in the Proti Chapel in the cathedral of Vicenza [Fig. 15]; the *Pietà* (1500) in the church of Santa Maria di Monte Berico in Vicenza [Fig. 26]; the *Virgin and Child with Sts Joseph and Bonaventure* (around 1507), and the *Presentation of the Child in the Temple with Donor* (1515-20), in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza [Figs 3, 146]; the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* (1515-20), in the Museo Correr of Venice [Fig. 145]; the *Adoration of the Child* (circa 1520), in the parish church of Orgiano [Fig. 19]; the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* (circa 1520), in the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Strasbourg [Fig. 143]; and the *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece* (1520-1522) [Fig. 25].

¹⁹¹ Edoardo Arslan, *Catalogo delle cose d'arte e di antichità d'Italia, Vicenza: 1: Le chiese* (Rome: De Luca, 1956), pp. 20-27.

by the artist between 1515 and 1520, that is to say, in the aftermath of the devastations of the war of the League of Cambrai, which ended in 1516. In light of this, the buyer's or commissioner's choice to purchase or request a painting featuring Joseph from Montagna may be considered either as an invocation of the saint's protection against plague and perils in war-torn Veneto, or as a way to express veneration and gratitude to the saint, potentially their namesake, once the war was over. Therefore, the appearance of St Joseph in Montagna's late paintings for domestic devotion cannot be simply a coincidence. Indeed, it is feasible that Montagna had been driven by his commercial mindset to include Joseph in his paintings as a consequence of the wave of cult activity and of the historical circumstances discussed above.

Another factor which accounts for the rapid dissemination of St Joseph's cult is the production of literary works dedicated to the saint, such as Isidoro Isolani's *Summa* or the unpublished *Christilogos peregrinorum*, a mystical poem by the Venetian Pietro Contarini, both works dating from the early 1520s. As noted earlier, the former work deserves the utmost attention as it is key to our understanding of Joseph's pictorial role in private devotional images. Besides his role as a steadfast protector of Mary and Jesus, Joseph is described by Isolani as the "silent saint" who receives the word of God in his dreams through the mediation of angels, and is praised for having a sharp intellect and sound knowledge of theology and philosophy.¹⁹² All these qualities, particularly the saint's resolute gaze as a sign of his learning and determined guardianship of the Holy Mother and Christ Child, have been highlighted with regards to a 1513 copy of Lotto's *Virgin and Child with St Joseph and an Angel*, now in

¹⁹² Wilson (2002), pp. 89-120; Id. (2009), pp. 134-135.

Princeton University Art Museum [Fig. 206].¹⁹³ Unlike this copy, in the Courtauld *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* by Montagna's workshop, Joseph's guardianship is conveyed by the gesture of his hands and his gaze directed toward the baby Jesus [Fig. 142]. Moreover, Joseph's massive and shiny forehead alludes to his authoritative status as a protector of the Christ Child, as well as to the enlightenment and ecstasy he achieved when hearing the angels' song, as argued for the saint in Francesco Vecellio's *The Nativity with the Shepherds* now in Houston [Fig. 207].¹⁹⁴ The same applies to the depiction of Joseph in Montagna's Strasbourg and Correr paintings of the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* [Figs 143, 145]. In both paintings the saint's illuminated and sizeable forehead stands out, notably in the Correr painting, where the gesture of the infant Christ, who places his left hand on Joseph's head, draws both Mary and the beholder's attention to the authority and intellectual acumen of his guardian.

On the whole, the function and destination of paintings on speculation issuing from Venetian Renaissance workshops are two aspects that have seldom been discussed, no doubt because of a lack of data on off-the-peg pictures. One of the most interesting contributions to this topic is Keith Christiansen's study on the practice of devotional painting in Giovanni Bellini's workshop.¹⁹⁵ Christiansen has contended that Giovanni Bellini's *Virgin and Child* held in the Venetian church of the Madonna dell'Orto until it was stolen in 1993 was made for speculative sale and purchased later in 1485 by the Venetian merchant Luca Navagero for his chapel in the Madonna dell'Orto

¹⁹³ Francesco Colalucci, *Bergamo negli anni di Lotto: pittura, guerra e società* (Bergamo: S.E.S.A.A.B., 1998), p. 72. See also Wilson (2009), p. 134.

¹⁹⁴ Wilson (2001), pp. 36-39; Id. (2004), p. 80. On Joseph's enlightenment and ecstatic adoration at the moment of the angels' song, see also Isolani (1861), vol. 1, pp. 247, 249.

¹⁹⁵ Christiansen (2004), pp. 7-57.

[Fig. 208].¹⁹⁶ Christiansen's proposal is intriguing, given that small-scale Virgin and Child paintings were usually kept in private homes rather than churches, which were the recipients of large-format paintings such as altarpieces. However, Nicolò Rondinelli's painting of *St John the Evangelist Appearing to Galla Placidia*, painted between 1490 and 1510 and now in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, calls for further research into the destination of small-size Virgin and Child paintings [Fig. 209]. Indeed, in Rondinelli's panel, a Virgin and Child painting is depicted on the altar of what seems to be a church chapel, where the narrative is staged.

It is however more common to think about such paintings as being destined for private houses, as some evidence shows in relation to Venice. The presence of holy images of the Virgin and Child in the houses of most social classes of Venetian Renaissance society, as noted by Ronda Kasl, is proven by inventories included in wills, vernacular spiritual guides, moral anecdotes and manuals of household management.¹⁹⁷ For instance, a "Madona," that is to say a Virgin and Child painting,¹⁹⁸ is recorded in the inventory of the Venetian patrician Domenico di Nicolò Capello. This painting is listed among the furnishings of the *camera d'oro piccolo* in Domenico Capello's palace in Venice, located on the Rio di San Lorenzo in the parish of Santa Maria Formosa.¹⁹⁹ Another useful source for identifying buyers of private devotional paintings in Renaissance Veneto is Lotto's *Libro di spese diverse*. In two annotations, dated 1542, Lotto mentions two paintings, one showing a Madonna and Child with

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁹⁷ Kasl (2004), pp. 61, 63.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁹⁹ ASVe, Cancelleria Inferiore, Miscellanea Notai Diversi, b. 35, n. 27 (22 June–11 July 1532), fols 11v–12, cited in Patricia Fortini Brown, 'Behind the Walls: The Material Culture of Venetian Elites,' in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State*, eds John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2000), pp. 309, 334.

cherubs, the other featuring a Madonna; the first was for the goldsmith Bartolomeo Carpan, the second for Lotto's niece Lucrezia when she became a nun.²⁰⁰ Lotto's annotations prove that domestic pious images were not only geared towards patricians but also towards *cittadini*.

Röstel and Chung have recently proposed that the Courtauld *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* by Montagna's workshop might have been commissioned for the private home of the wealthy Proti of Vicenza [Fig. 142]. Their hypothesis is based on the close resemblance of the position of Christ's legs and St Joseph's head to the same details in Montagna's lost fresco of *The Adoration of the Child with Saints and the Donor Pietro Proti* [Fig. 15]. Yet they have not ruled out the possibility that the work could have been painted for the Ospedale dei Proti,²⁰¹ a lay charitable institution for the assistance of impoverished nobles founded in 1412 by the Vicentine noble Giampietro Proti.²⁰² The role of the governors of the Ospedale, and more generally of ecclesiastical bodies, as promoters of the arts was not a novelty in Vicenza. Indeed, in accordance with the provisions of Giampietro Proti's will,²⁰³ the governors of the Ospedale also commissioned an altarpiece of the Madonna della Misericordia from Battista da Vicenza [Fig. 210].²⁰⁴ By suggesting that the Courtauld panel might have been destined for a public location, as argued by Christiansen with regards to Bellini's *Virgin and Child* formerly in the Madonna dell'Orto [Fig. 208], Röstel and Chung have resisted the tendency to link small-

²⁰⁰ Lotto (1969), p. 337.

²⁰¹ Röstel and Chung (2015), p. 24.

²⁰² On the origins and charitable activities of the Ospedale dei Proti, see Francesco Bianchi, *Ospedali e politiche assistenziali a Vicenza nel Quattrocento* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2014), pp. 121-171.

²⁰³ Giampietro Proti's will was drawn up in the vernacular by the notary Girolamo di Andrea da Pusterla on 28 March 1412, and a copy of it, which was authenticated on 16 December 1478, is now in IPAB, *Ospedale dei Proti*, b. 6, reg. G, fols 1r-17r.

²⁰⁴ Bianchi (2014), p. 125 note 13. Bianchi points out that Battista da Vicenza's altarpiece is still visible in the chapel of the Ospedale dei Proti in Vicenza.

scale holy pictures with domestic settings only.²⁰⁵ It is worth underlining that, while for Christiansen Bellini's *Virgin and Child* was a painting made for the open market, according to Röstel and Chung, the Courtauld *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* could have been executed at the request of the governors of the Ospedale dei Proti.²⁰⁶ It should be taken into account also that this painting may have been executed initially on speculation. The painter may indeed have been asked later by the governors, who intended to acquire it, to include St Joseph in the composition, as a result of the broad spread of the cult of the saint in northern Italy around 1500.²⁰⁷ The same could apply to Giovanni Speranza's replica of Montagna's *Virgin and Child* now in Amsterdam [Figs 185, 193]. Speranza's version differs from his prototype by the inclusion of St Joseph. Since Montagna's original was painted between 1496 and 1503, its copies are unlikely to predate the early years of the Cinquecento, when, according to Carolyn Wilson, the cult of St Joseph began to develop in northern Italy. It is therefore possible to postulate that the painting could have been initially executed on speculation by Speranza and subsequently modified in accordance with the customer's yearning to fulfil his devotion to St Joseph. Overall, on the one hand we cannot be entirely sure whether these works were painted on commission or for the open market; on the other hand, their possible setting in a church or hospital other than a domestic interior calls for a reappraisal of the context in which small-format holy images functioned in Renaissance Veneto.

Another devotional painting whose function and destination are still a discussion point is Montagna's *The Virgin and Child with Sts John the Baptist and*

²⁰⁵ For further reading on this tendency, see Cooper (2006), pp. 190-203.

²⁰⁶ Röstel and Chung (2015), p. 24.

²⁰⁷ On the diffusion of the cult of St Joseph in Renaissance Italy, see Wilson (2001).

Francis, painted around 1485 and now in the Cini collection in the Palazzo Cini of Venice [Fig. 211]. The larger format of the painting, which enabled the painter to include half-length saints flanking the Virgin and Child, makes this work suitable also for non-domestic contexts. Indeed, these pious images could be displayed either in the private residences of wealthy patricians, or in grander settings such as a family chapel in a church.²⁰⁸ Two similar examples are Giovanni Bellini's *Sacra Conversazione Dolfín* in the Venetian church of San Francesco della Vigna and Cima da Conegliano's *Virgin and Child with Sts John the Baptist and Paul*, now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia of Venice [Figs 212-213]. Bellini's painting was completed in 1507 and placed on the altar of Giacomo Dolfín's chapel.²⁰⁹ Cima's work, painted around 1504-1505, was recorded in the seventeenth century by Carlo Ridolfi in the Venetian house of the collector Bartolo da Fin.²¹⁰ If both paintings are large-format panels showing the Virgin Mary seated full-length and accompanied by two half-length saints, they differ in size and format from Montagna's *The Virgin and Child with Sts John the Baptist and Francis*. More to the point, Bellini's and Cima's paintings measure 97 x 141 cm and 82 x 122 cm, respectively. Montagna's work, by contrast, measures 180 x 148 cm and is in a vertical format. Its height is indeed larger than its width, as in the case of his church altarpieces, such as the *Sandrigio Altarpiece*, which measures 181.6 x 152 cm, almost the same dimensions as Montagna's *Virgin and Child with Sts John the Baptist and Francis* [Figs 159, 211].²¹¹ The latter, given its larger and unusual dimensions, was not a

²⁰⁸ Schmidt Arcangeli (2015), p. 289.

²⁰⁹ Villa in *Giovanni Bellini* (2008), pp. 298-300.

²¹⁰ Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte: ovvero le vite degli illustri pittori veneti e dello stato*, ed. Detlev Freiherrn von Hadeln, 2 vols (Berlin: G. Grote, 1914, 4th edition, first published 1648), vol. 2, p. 202.

²¹¹ On the *Sandrigio Altarpiece*, see Elizabeth Carroll, 'Rediscovering Bartolomeo Montagna: A Fresh Look at the Altarpiece for the Parish Church of Sandrigio, Vicenza,' *The Burlington Magazine* 153 (2011), pp. 379-382.

private devotional painting made for speculative sale, as correctly argued by Elizabeth Carroll.²¹² I believe that Montagna's *The Virgin and Child with Sts John the Baptist and Francis* is more likely to have been intended for a grander ecclesiastical context than a private house.

Another devotional painter whose Virgin and Child paintings have not always been linked to a domestic setting is Cima da Conegliano, notably his *Virgin and Child* painted in 1495 and now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna [Fig. 214]. Peter Humfrey has proposed that this panel might have been destined for an altar in the sacristy of the Bolognese church of San Giovanni in Monte, as part of a campaign of redecoration of the building carried out in the 1490s and early 1500s. Even so, Humfrey has not ruled out the possibility that the painting was intended for a household space, and only later donated to the church.²¹³ If this hypothesis were proven, we would be confronted with yet another issue, that is, whether the panel was initially made by Cima for speculative sale or on commission. In regard to this, Humfrey has argued that the high quality of Cima's panel suggests that the work was commissioned as part of the redecoration of the church, a project which involved major artists such as Lorenzo Costa, Francesco Francia, Perugino and Raphael.²¹⁴ Hence, Humfrey seems to imply that the remarkable craftsmanship of Cima's *Virgin and Child* derives from two factors: first, the fact that it was a

²¹² Carroll (2006), p. 97.

²¹³ Humfrey (1983), p. 87. As regards the possible original location of the panel in the sacristy of the Bolognese church of San Giovanni in Monte, Humfrey has relied on the accounts of two seventeenth-century historians, Antonio Masini and Carlo Cesare Malvasia. In his *Bologna perlustrata*, published in 1650, Masini records that "Gio. Battista da Conegliano pittore, di sua mano è una Madonna con il Puttino in piedi, la quale si trova nella Sagrestia de' Canonici Regolari di S. Giovanni in Monte", see Antonio Masini, *Bologna perlustrata*, 3 vols (Bologna: Benacci, 1666, 3rd edition, first published 1650), vol. 3, p. 625. In Malvasia's *Le pitture di Bologna*, published in 1686, one reads that "Nella Sagrestia . . . sopra la porta . . . una Madonna sull'asse scrittovi: Iacobus à Conegliano", see Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Le pitture di Bologna* (Bologna: Monti, 1686), p. 292.

²¹⁴ Humfrey (1983), p. 87.

commissioned work; secondly, the circumstances of the commission, a prestigious redecoration project which presumably fostered competition among some of the greatest artists who worked in Bologna at the time. However, this line of interpretation overlooks the possibility that Cima's panel may have been one of the many ready-made devotional pictures executed by the painter in the expectation of selling it on to the Venetian art market. Moreover, Humfrey's proposal inevitably undervalues the role of Cima, as the high level of execution of his panel may not depend on the request of a specific commissioner or on the circumstances of a commission, but simply on the ability of the artist. Cima's refined technique is all the more noticeable when compared to two of the several copies of his *Virgin and Child* now in Bologna, those held in the Holburne of Menstrie Museum of Bath and the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo [Figs 215-216]. In these works, which Humfrey has deemed workshop replicas,²¹⁵ the quality of the brushwork is clearly inferior to that of the master in the Bolognese version. Moreover, if the *Virgin and Child* are replicated faithfully in both copies, some changes can be found in the landscape depicted in the background of the panel in the Accademia Carrara. The landscape in the background of the Bath panel, on the contrary, seems to be almost identical to that painted by Cima in his Bolognese version, although the damaged surface paint of this copy makes details hardly legible. The faithful reproduction of the *Virgin and Child* and the variations on the rest of the composition in these copies attest to workshop assistants' use of cartoons for design replication which normally included the figural group but not background details.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 78-79.

²¹⁶ As noted by Bambach (1999), p. 100; Golden (2004), p. 108.

Another crucial aspect is the place in which private devotional paintings were displayed and sold between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Most notably, it is essential to distinguish Renaissance workshops specialising in the production of commissioned works from workshops that catered to the ready-made sector. Interestingly, by scrutinising Florentine cadastral documents drafted in 1480, Rita Comanducci has inferred that workshops with large exhibiting spaces for speculative sale were normally located in the most commercial and richest parts of the city, as in the case of Neri di Bicci's *bottega* in Porta Rossa in Florence. On the other hand, she has conjectured that less commercial urban areas were usually the headquarters of smaller workshops which turned out works on commission.²¹⁷ Comanducci's association of the size and location of Neri di Bicci's *bottega* producing ready-made works with the business centre of Florence fits the case of Giovanni Bellini's workshop, situated in the Venetian parish of San Lio, where the artist moved in 1459.²¹⁸ It is no wonder that Bellini decided to set up his workplace near Rialto and San Marco, the most commercial areas of Venice. Here, from 1436, local artists were given permission to sell their works outside their workshops during the annual Ascension Fair. In 1441 Venetian artists were also allowed to sell their paintings at the weekly markets held on Wednesdays at San Polo and on Saturdays at San Marco.²¹⁹ It is thus evident that in fifteenth-century Venice there were two marketing outlets for private devotional pictures made for the open market: large artists' workshops situated in commercial urban areas and equipped with exhibiting spaces for the "walk-in" buyer; and the weekly

²¹⁷ Comanducci (2003), p. 108.

²¹⁸ Jennifer Fletcher, 'I Bellini,' in *La bottega dell'artista tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, eds Roberto Cassanelli, Sylvie Béguin et al. (Milan: Jaca Book, 1998), p. 133.

²¹⁹ Favaro (1975), p. 73; Matthew (2003), p. 254. See also James E. Shaw, 'Institutional Controls and the Retail of Paintings: The Painters' Guild of Early Modern Venice,' in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe* (2006), p. 110.

markets held at San Marco and San Polo or the Ascension Fair. Louisa Matthew has also drawn attention to a 1518 regulation clamping down on artists and apprentices who sold their works from the Rialto bridge or simply from the streets rather than their workshops.²²⁰

It is plausible that a prolific painter like Giovanni Bellini, whose workshop painted over eighty versions of the theme of the Virgin and Child,²²¹ had large areas of his shop devoted to the display of these highly marketable holy images. As regards Montagna's *bottega*, there is no evidence of its dimensions, although we know that it was strategically located in *contrada* San Lorenzo,²²² a historical and central neighbourhood of Vicenza, where the artist settled in 1484. San Lorenzo was indeed situated in the north-west part of the old town, near the river Bacchiglione, which must have facilitated the shipping of Montagna's devotional works to Venice, where they could be sold at weekly fairs. In addition, Montagna's serial workshop production must be considered in light of the rapid economic and demographic development of the city in the Quattrocento, which largely derived from the burgeoning wool industry. In Vicenza and its territory, wool, silk, metal, wood, glass, and paper industries became pivotal resources between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²²³ Vicenza's population benefited hugely from the growth of these industries: money circulated more widely and an entrepreneurial mindset developed. The commercial development of fifteenth-century Vicenza could have been a valuable reason for a painter to embark on an enterprise aimed at supplying the non-commissioned marketplace.

²²⁰ Matthew (2003), p. 254.

²²¹ As noted by Golden (2004), p. 93.

²²² Puppi (1962), p. 44.

²²³ Francesco Bianchi and Edoardo Demo, 'Economia, demografia, società,' in *Storia di Vicenza*, ed. Giuseppe Gullino (Sommacampagna, Verona: Cierre, 2014), pp. 109-113.

In conclusion, in this section I have identified some paintings for domestic devotion ascribed to Montagna and his workshop which might have been made for speculative sale and customised at a later stage, according to the purchaser's aesthetic taste and spiritual needs. I have placed works for domestic devotion likely made for the open market in their religious and historical context, particularly the diffusion of the cult of St Joseph in Renaissance Veneto and the war of the League of Cambrai. Moreover, by calling attention to the studies of Keith Christansen on Giovanni Bellini's Madonna dell'Orto *Virgin and Child* painting and of Alexander Röstel and Jae Youn Chung on the Courtauld copy of Montagna's Pavia *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* [Figs 142, 151, 208], I have called for a reappraisal of the destination of these works. Private devotional paintings might have also been destined for places of public worship, such as churches or hospitals, which implies that non-domestic contexts also need to be considered as potential recipients of this type of devotional imagery.

2.6 Painting on Commission: Montagna's *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist* in the Walker Art Gallery of Liverpool

The purpose of this section is to highlight technical and iconographic aspects which suggest that some of Montagna's Virgin and Child paintings, namely his *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist* in the Walker Art Gallery of Liverpool [Fig. 217], are likely to be commissioned works. The Liverpool panel was probably painted by Montagna around 1483, during or immediately after a potential trip to Venice, where in 1482 the Scuola Grande di San Marco tasked him with painting two *teleri*.²²⁴ The painter had already been to Venice in 1469, when he is believed to have trained with Giovanni Bellini, and could familiarise himself with his Virgin and Child paintings. Lionello Puppi was the first scholar who suggested that Montagna executed the panel around 1483,²²⁵ a chronology that has found wide acceptance among art historians. The panel, which has been in the Walker Art Gallery of Liverpool since 1978, stands out as one of Montagna's best preserved paintings of the Virgin and Child. Indeed, the high quality of the picture and the very good condition of both the wooden support and paint layers have long been praised by scholars.²²⁶ Recently, Lucco has extolled the pictorial skill showcased by the artist in depicting the landscape in the backdrop, notably the sky, air, and water which are marked with crystalline clearness.²²⁷ Another striking element is the highly wrought underdrawing still visible through the paint layers, which proves that the artist planned carefully the execution of this picture. The tight and parallel hatching

²²⁴ ASVe, *Scuola Grande di San Marco, Atti*, b. 16 bis (1428-1523), fol. 6v (23 February 1483), cited in Paoletti (1894), pp. 11-12; Borenius (1912), p. 215 doct 1; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 119.

²²⁵ Puppi (1962), pp. 43, 107.

²²⁶ In 1901 Bernard Berenson categorised the work as one of the masterpieces of Venetian painting. For further reference, see Bernard Berenson, *Venetian Painting Chiefly Before Titian: At the Exhibition of Venetian Art, New Gallery, 1895* (London: Vacher & Sons, 1901), p. 115.

²²⁷ Lucco (2014), p. 307.

used to build up areas of shade and create *chiaroscuro* contrasts, particularly in the Christ Child's left arm and leg, stands testament to the underdrawing technique probably learned in Giovanni Bellini's workshop.²²⁸ Such a spotless combination of meticulously rendered details, particularly the landscape and the Virgin's creased left sleeve, and masterful underdrawing and brushwork, are hard to come by in any other painting of the Virgin and Child by Montagna. The Antonellesque *Virgin and Child* now in the Museo Civico of Belluno is one of the very few paintings for domestic devotion in which the artist succeeded in attaining such an effective combination [inventory n. 12; Fig. 218].

The attention drawn by scholars to Montagna's Liverpool panel is also due to the controversy regarding the identity of the bearded man interacting with the group of the Holy Mother and Christ Child. The most tenable possibility is that Montagna chose to depict St John the Baptist, as stated in the 1891 Royal Academy exhibition catalogue in which the painting was first published.²²⁹ In 1894 Berenson proposed that the figure was St Roch.²³⁰ This proposal has not found widespread support, while the identification suggested in 1891 has been widely accepted by art historians, such as Tancred Borenius²³¹ and Roberto De Suarez.²³² The most disputable proposal, put forward by George Francis Hill in 1932, identified the figure as the marquis of Mantua Francesco Gonzaga, on the basis of the former's resemblance to the donor's portrait in Andrea Mantegna's *Madonna della Vittoria* now in the Louvre [Fig.

²²⁸ Galassi (1999), p. 106.

²²⁹ *Royal Academy Exhibition Catalogue: Works by the Old Masters* (London: WM. Clowes and Sons, 1891), cat. 156.

²³⁰ Bernard Berenson, *The Venetian Painters of the Renaissance with an Index to Their Works* (New York-London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894), p. 107; Id. (1957), p. 115.

²³¹ Borenius (1909), pp. 23-24.

²³² Roberto De Suarez, *Bartolommeo Montagna* (Florence: Istituto di edizioni artistiche, 1921), p. 7.

219].²³³ This hypothesis has been convincingly discarded by Lucco on the grounds that the halo on the figure's head in Montagna's composition is original and not a later addition. Lucco has also argued that the thickness of the saint's reddish mantle might point to that worn by St John the Baptist in the desert. As regards Berenson's identification of the bearded man as St Roch, Lucco has expressed his dissent on the basis of the lack of St Roch's traditional attributes, such as the pilgrim's wide-brimmed hat and cross-staff.

Lucco has also underlined the interaction between the Virgin and Child and St John the Baptist, who kisses the baby Jesus' feet.²³⁴ The origins of this motif in Italian art can be traced back to the 1260s in sculpture and early 1300s in painting. An example is a predella panel of Duccio di Buoninsegna's *Maestà*, painted in the years 1308-1311 for the cathedral of Siena and now in the city's Museo dell'Opera del Duomo [Fig. 220]. The panel shows an *Adoration of the Magi* in which a magus is portrayed in the act of kissing the baby Jesus' foot, as a sign of reverence and devotion.²³⁵ Particular emphasis on this gesture is found in a passage of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, a devotional text of Franciscan origin written in the late Middle Ages, in which the kissing of Christ's foot is described in detail.²³⁶ The same can be argued with reference to the gesture of St John the Baptist in Montagna's Liverpool panel, in which the saint's kneeling position and his act of kissing the Christ Child's feet were certainly meant to foster the beholder's sense of awe and adoration towards the holy infant [Fig. 217].

²³³ George Francis Hill, 'Francesco Gonzaga and Bartolomeo Montagna,' *The Burlington Magazine* 60 (1932), p. 197.

²³⁴ Lucco (2014), p. 307.

²³⁵ Joanna Cannon, 'Kissing the Virgin's Foot: Adoratio Before the Madonna and Child Enacted, Depicted, Imagined,' *Studies in Iconography* 31 (2010), pp. 23-28.

²³⁶ Pseudo-Bonaventura, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Ital. 115, eds Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 38-39; Iohannis de Caulibus, *Meditaciones vite Christi olim S. Bonaventuro attributae*, ed. Mary Stallings-Taney (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), p. 35.

Laura De Zuani has recently underlined the imaginative originality showcased by Montagna in his way of positioning the saint squeezed into a corner of the picture field.²³⁷ It is likely that Montagna's compositional formula, which reappears in his later Correr *Virgin and Child with St Joseph*, inspired his pupil Giovanni Speranza's depiction of St Joseph confined to a corner of his *Virgin and Child with St Joseph and the Infant St John the Baptist* now in the Museo Civico Amedeo Lia in La Spezia [Figs 145, 187]. Montagna's depiction of Joseph relegated to a corner of the composition inspired three more paintings of the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* by Speranza, two of which are lost while one is now in Strasbourg [Figs 203, 221-222]. The same positioning of the saint is noticeable in Benedetto Montagna's engraving of *The Virgin and Child with St Joseph and the Infant St John the Baptist in a Landscape*, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum of Cambridge [Fig. 223]. Likewise, Giovanni Bellini painted a squeezed donor into the bottom right corner of his *Virgin and Child with Donor* now in the Narodowe Museum of Poznan, painted around 1500 [Fig. 224]. Bellini's panel has long been deemed the prototype that inspired the paintings of the *Virgin and Child with Donor* ascribed to Bellini's collaborators Andrea Previtali, Marco Basaiti, Pier Maria Pennacchi and Vittore Belliniano, all dated to the first decade of the sixteenth century [Figs 205, 225-227].²³⁸ In light of this, the chronology of Bellini's painting makes the originality of Montagna's figural solution in the Liverpool version, painted around 1483, even more remarkable.

Notwithstanding the difficulty in clarifying whether Montagna's *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist* was really painted on commission, there is one

²³⁷ De Zuani (2015), p. 39.

²³⁸ Fritz Heinemann, *Bellini e i Belliniani*, 2 vols (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1962), vol. 1, pp. 28, 37-38, 136, 291.

reason for this work to be a case in point [Fig. 217]. The role of the saint as both image of the faithful and intercessor with the group of the Virgin and Christ Child on behalf of the pious beholder indeed suggests that the panel is a commissioned work. St John the Baptist figures as an adult prophet rather than a playmate of Christ, as in the majority of small-scale Virgin and Child paintings made in Renaissance Italy. Despite its success among Italian painters of the Renaissance, to judge from Montagna's extant works the theme of the Virgin and Christ Child playing with the infant St John the Baptist does not seem to have piqued his interest.²³⁹ Indeed, only one painting of the *Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist*, now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Vicenza, has been ascribed to Montagna so far [inventory n. A 7; Fig. 165]. Moreover, when St John the Baptist is represented as a bearded man clad in a red or green mantle and camel fur, and holding a cross-staff, he is normally depicted either full-length or half-length in large-scale paintings. A case in point is Giovanni Bellini's *Baptism of Christ* in the Vicentine church of Santa Corona, where the saint is shown full-length, while he appears half-length in Cima da Conegliano's *Virgin and Child with Sts Jerome and John the Baptist*, now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington [Figs 39, 228]. In Montagna's *oeuvre*, the saint is depicted full-length in many multi-figural compositions showing the Virgin and Child flanked by saints. Three examples are the altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child with Sts Onuphrius and John the Baptist* [Fig. 12]; the *Cartigliano Altarpiece* [Fig. 18]; and *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist and John the Evangelist*, in the parish church of San Michele Arcangelo at Sarmego di Grumolo delle Abbadesse, near Vicenza [Fig. 20]. St John the Baptist is also represented half-

²³⁹ It must be borne in mind that some of Montagna's works may not have survived. Therefore, my statement is simply based on analysis of the extant autograph works by the hand of the master.

length in Montagna's middle-sized painting of *The Virgin and Child with Sts John the Baptist and Francis*, now in the Cini collection of Palazzo San Vio in Venice [Fig. 211]. Yet, in the Liverpool panel, the saint is depicted neither full-length nor half-length, but is instead compressed into the bottom left corner of the picture field, and only his head and one of his hands are visible [Fig. 217]. It seems impossible that Montagna could have made this painting on speculation and added St John the Baptist later at the request of a buyer, since the Christ Child gazes downward directly at the saint, who must therefore have been part of the composition from the outset. The presence of the Baptist might be symptomatic of the commissioner's strong devotion to the saint. Indeed, it seems likely to me that this painting was a commissioned work requested by a buyer who longed to possess a cult image in which the saint served both as a mediator between the painted sacred space and the real world, and as an aid to devotion. More to the point, the physical lowliness of St John the Baptist, placed at a much lower level than the group of the Holy Mother and Christ Child, communicates a compelling sense of humility and evokes the kneeling position of the worshipper during prayer. The fact that the saint is not depicted with his hands clasped in prayer does not diminish his reverence for the sacred authority of the Virgin and Christ Child, which is in fact reinforced by the gesture of his left hand touching his chest. I would argue that this gesture points to the act of contrition and quest for forgiveness that St John the Baptist addresses to the Christ Child on behalf of the pious beholder. Accordingly, the gaze of the Christ Child directed downwards towards the saint reassures the devotee as much as the melancholic and inward-looking countenance of the Virgin, who foresees the salvation of humanity through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The absent mindedness of the Virgin recalls the

visionary state in which the viewer-worshipper needed to be when endeavouring to picture the image of God during prayer.²⁴⁰

The peculiarity of the compositional formula of the Liverpool panel stems from Montagna's revival of a Byzantine iconographic type. Indeed, Montagna seems to have creatively merged some characteristics of the Byzantine Virgin and Child icons of the pre-iconoclast period with the modern pictures of the same subject issuing from the workshop of Giovanni Bellini. Bissera Pentcheva has thrown light on the visual formula distinguishing the Byzantine icons before Iconoclasm. In particular, she has argued that in pre-iconoclastic icons, such as the *Salus populi romani* in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome [Fig. 229], the Virgin is shown tightly embracing her infant. As a result, in these icons the focus is on the relationship between the two holy figures. On the other hand, in post-iconoclastic icons of the Hodegetria type the Virgin no longer jealously holds the body of the Christ Child with both hands, but rather offers her infant to the viewer-worshipper, as in a thirteenth-century icon now in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid, Macedonia [Fig. 230]. Furthermore, in post-iconoclastic icons there is an emphasis on the interceding role of the Virgin, who acts on behalf of the faithful by gesturing with her right hand toward the blessing Christ Child.²⁴¹

In Montagna's Liverpool *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist*, the gesture of the Virgin holding her infant tightly is certainly reminiscent of the firm grasp with which the Panagia carries the Christ Child in pre-iconoclastic icons. A close comparison between the Santa Maria Maggiore icon, probably painted in the fifth or sixth century, and Montagna's panel, shows the extent to

²⁴⁰ As noted by Kasl (2004), p. 81.

²⁴¹ Bissera Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2006), pp. 110-117.

which the painter drew on this visual formula. The latter has been adjusted by Montagna to the depiction of the Virgin and Christ Child seen from an oblique angle rather than frontally, according to a compositional formula that his master Giovanni Bellini began to experiment with in his very early Madonnas, as in the *Davis Madonna* painted in the early 1460s [Fig. 153].²⁴² It is therefore not absurd to imagine that Montagna painted the Liverpool panel for a commissioner who was familiar with and interested in the modern versions of the subject painted by Giovanni Bellini and his workshop.

In Montagna's Liverpool panel, neither the Virgin nor the Child addresses the beholder, as they turn sideways in a three-quarter profile towards St John the Baptist [Fig. 217]. The separation between the real world and the pictorial space is also achieved through the depiction of a painted parapet, another device widely used by Giovanni Bellini and subsequently adopted by several Venetian painters.²⁴³ The extensive use of the parapet as a means of either creating a barrier between the pictorial composition and the beholder or fostering the spectator's engagement with the painted holy figures, is manifest in Montagna's domestic devotional images. Indeed, of Montagna's thirty-nine paintings of the Virgin and Child, only four omit a fictive ledge.²⁴⁴ In the case of the Liverpool panel, the only way for the viewer-worshipper to be able to interact with the group of the Virgin and Child was to identify himself with St John the Baptist. Cult images could stir up the worshipper's imagination either by showing the figures in the act of directly engaging the beholder, or by re-

²⁴² Pächt (2003), pp. 159, 165.

²⁴³ Morse (2006), p. 139.

²⁴⁴ The four paintings of the Virgin and Child by Montagna which I am referring to are: The *Virgin and Child* now in the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford [inventory n. A 724]; the lost *Madonna and Child* once in the collection of the English doctor Sir Thomas Barlow; the lost *Virgin and Child* sold by Sotheby's at auction on 8 July 1992, lot 217, cited in Lucco (2014), p. 305; and the *Virgin and Child with St Joseph* now in the Museo Correr in Venice [Fig. 145].

enacting, through the speech between the painted figures, the mystical dialogue with the Godhead that the faithful longed to experience during prayer. However, the level of mysticism that the worshipper wished to experience while reading sacred texts or reciting prayers was in sharp distinction to the saints' mystical experience.²⁴⁵ When beholding the Baptist enthralled by the vision of the Virgin and Christ Child, the worshipper was certainly conscious that he would not attain the same nearness to the divinity as that which the saints could achieve in their mystical experience. Yet by commissioning a pious image, such as Montagna's panel in Liverpool, the faithful could increase their chance of having a mystical vision, which was experienced at the very maximum level by the saint depicted in the picture. It is also for this reason that the Baptist is critical to our understanding of the real function of this panel. His inclusion in the composition must indeed have been deemed necessary by the commissioner, who aimed to identify himself with the saint during prayer.

²⁴⁵ Belting (1996), pp. 410-411.

CHAPTER THREE

MONTAGNA: ARTIST AND BUSINESSMAN

In this chapter, divided into four sections, I have availed myself of published archival documents which mention payments for Montagna's paintings and real estate transactions. First, I cite and comment on primary sources, especially account books, and on some of the pioneering studies on Venetian Renaissance artists' earnings from artistic commissions and business practices. These sources provide useful insights into the business mindset of artists such as Lorenzo Lotto, Jacopo and Francesco Bassano, and Titian. Secondly, I examine the impact of landownership on Montagna's socioeconomic status by taking into account the historical and economic context of Renaissance Vicenza, the painter's family and social ties with individuals from different social classes, and his strong connection with the Vicentino. Section Three is a study of Montagna's investment trends, based on the calculation of his gross earnings from painting and real estate activities, and of his investments in real estate during each decade, from the 1480s to his death in 1523. In Section Four I examine the purchase and leaseback loans consistently made by Montagna throughout his life so as to supplement his gains from artistic commissions. By entering into an agricultural agreement called *livello*, he managed to conceal his interest-bearing loans made by purchasing real estate from his borrowers and then renting it out to them by charging an interest in cash or kind for one or more years. More to the point, I hope to demonstrate that the painter's exploitation of the juridical, social and financial advantages of the *livello* is indicative of his business acumen. I also contextualise Montagna's money-lending practice by comparing it with the

lending policies of the Jews and Monti di Pietà on the basis of size and length of loans, and interest rates.

3.1 The Business Mindset and Earnings of Renaissance Artists:

Revisions and Reappraisals of Bartolomeo Montagna

This section focuses on the literature of Renaissance artists' income from art and non-artistic business, and on Bartolomeo Montagna's pricing strategy. Contracts of artistic commissions, letters, diaries, records of lawsuits and account books are proof of the business mindset of Renaissance artists. These sources have been used by scholars to pinpoint the tangible factors of a commission, such as paintings' dimensions and production material, and intangible factors, such as the relationship between artist and commissioner, piety and honour. These factors are essential to gain deeper insight into Montagna's artistic career and socioeconomic status, which I shall investigate from both a Venetian and non-Venetian perspective.

Contracts are instrumental in reconstructing the business mindset of Renaissance artists. Hannelore Glasser's thesis stands out as one of the earliest attempts to classify the various types of contracts, with specific reference to fifteenth-century Florentine painting and sculpture. Glasser called attention to a clause of the contract for Ghiberti's statue of *St Matthew*, commissioned in 1419 by the Cambio guild for its niche in the church of Orsanmichele in Florence. According to the clause, the artist could not make any reference to his revenue from previous commissions, such as for the statue of *St John the Baptist* sculpted between 1412 and 1416 for the Calimala guild's niche in Orsanmichele. This clause was included in the contract because, as noted by Glasser, artists used to mention payments received for other works from other patrons with a view to increasing their earnings from future commissions.¹ The

¹ Hannelore Glasser, 'Artists' Contracts of the Early Renaissance,' Ph.D. thesis (Columbia University 1965, published 1968), pp. 41-48. See also Evelyn Welch, *Art and Society in Italy*,

clause suggests that Ghiberti might have been looked upon by the guild as a shrewd negotiator. Aside from contracts, account books are among the most useful tools to delve into the business mindset of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century artists. These books provide scholars with valuable information on prices received or offered by artists for their works, loans made or raised, and expenses for production material, such as colours. Studies on artists from central Italy have benefited from the large amount of data recorded in Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Quaderno*,² Neri di Bicci's *Ricordanze*,³ Bernardo di Stefano Rosselli's *Book of Creditors and Debtors*,⁴ and Alesso Baldovinetti's *Libro di ricordi*.⁵ Artists from northern Italy also deserve to be singled out for their entrepreneurial attitude, which is unveiled especially in Lorenzo Lotto's *Libro di spese diverse*⁶ and the Bassano's *Libro secondo di dare ed avere della famiglia Da Ponte*.⁷ Other Renaissance artists from northern Italy who used to keep account books were Giovanni da Udine,⁸ Alessandro Vittoria⁹ and Paolo Farinati.¹⁰ Lotto's *Libro di spese diverse*, compiled between 1538 and 1556, the year in which the artist passed away, is arguably the most informative account book of Renaissance Italy. The manuscript, which combines the emotional approach of a spiritual

1350-1500 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 103-114; O'Malley (2004), pp. 17-37; Id. (2005).

² Richard Krautheimer, *Lorenzo Ghiberti* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, 3rd edition, first published 1956).

³ Neri di Bicci (1976).

⁴ ASF, Fondo Rosselli del Turco, n. 6: *Debitori e creditori di Bernardo di Stefano Rosselli, 1500(1)-1512(13)*, n. 6, fol. 256s. See also Guidotti (1986), pp. 544-550; Comanducci (2003), pp. 106-107; Ciampaglia (2008).

⁵ Alesso Baldovinetti, *I Ricordi di Alesso Baldovinetti, pittore fiorentino del XV secolo*, ed. Giovanni Pierotti (Lucca: Landi, 1868); Herbert P. Horne, 'A Newly Discovered 'Libro di Ricordi' of Alesso Baldovinetti,' *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 2:4 (June 1903), pp. 22-32; 2:5 (July 1903), pp. 167-174.

⁶ Adolfo Venturi, 'Il libro di conti di Lorenzo Lotto (1538-1556),' *Le gallerie nazionali italiane I* (1893-1894), pp. 115-224; Lotto (1969); Francesco De Carolis, *Lorenzo Lotto. Il libro di spese diverse* (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2017).

⁷ Francesco and Jacopo da Ponte, *Il Libro secondo di Francesco e Jacopo da Ponte*, ed. Michelangelo Muraro (Bassano del Grappa: G.B. Verci, 1992).

⁸ Giovanni da Udine, *I libri dei conti*, ed. Liliana Cargnelutti (Udine: Casamassima, 1987).

⁹ Riccardo Predelli, 'Le memorie e le carte di Alessandro Vittoria,' *Archivio trentino* 23 (1908), pp. 54-74, 129-229.

¹⁰ Paolo Farinati, *Giornale: 1573-1606*, ed. Lionello Puppi (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1968).

diary with the mathematical precision of an account book, provides useful information on prices of the painter's works, such as the altarpiece of the *Assumption of the Virgin* painted for the church of San Francesco alle Scale in Ancona [Fig. 127]. For this painting, commissioned in 1549 by the Franciscans, Lotto was paid 400 *scudi*, a staggering amount compared to the modest sum of 40 *scudi* that he earned by selling thirty small intarsia cartoons and sixteen paintings through a lottery held in Ancona in 1550.¹¹ The lottery unravels some key facets of Lotto's business mindset: his pragmatism, which prompted him to part with some of his works to be able to pay off his debts; his awareness of the monetary value of his works, which he clearly regarded as commodities, and of the dynamics of the art market; and his ability to find alternative ways of earning money in a period of financial hardship, and promote his own works during commercial events.¹² In the *Libro*, Lotto's capability of marketing his work is proven by his ties to numerous agents who occasionally sold works on his behalf. Among his dealers were the gilder Giovan Maria da Legnago, the architect Jacopo Sansovino, the jeweller Bartolomeo Carpan in Venice, two merchants in Ancona and Rome, and an associate of Carpan in Sicily.¹³ Lotto also recorded in the *Libro* that he refashioned some copies so as to make them more commercial,¹⁴ and that, in July 1551, he purchased cloth with the revenue from the sale of eight hundred and eighty-four lottery tickets.¹⁵

¹¹ Lotto (1969), p. 128. See also Matthew (2003), p. 257.

¹² It must be noted that there is evidence that lotteries for the sale and purchase of works of art were arranged in Flanders during the second half of the fifteenth century. For further reference, see Lorne Campbell, 'The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century,' *Burlington Magazine* 118 (1976), p. 195.

¹³ Lotto (2003), pp. 68-69 fols 43v-44, 90-91 fols 60v-61, 92-93 fols 61v-62, 94-95 fols 62v-63, 119 fol. 77, 120-121 fols 77v-78. See also Matthew (2006), pp. 322-323.

¹⁴ Lotto (2003), p. 88 fol. 59v; Matthew (2006), p. 313.

¹⁵ Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 205.

Francesco De Carolis has recently offered an interesting interpretation of Lotto's business mindset. In his analysis of the *Libro di spese diverse*, he has stressed Lotto's awareness of the dynamics of the contemporary art market, evidenced by his tendency to allow buyers to set the price of his paintings. Lotto's attitude has been hailed by De Carolis as a rational and praiseworthy way of subordinating a profit-seeking attitude to moral rectitude. It is for this reason that De Carolis has compared Lotto's behaviour to the mentality of Renaissance merchants, whose accounting systems and record books resulted from their rational and ethical creed.¹⁶ Lotto indeed used double-entry bookkeeping in his *Libro* to record transactions in debit and credit form, as done by merchants as early as the Middle Ages.¹⁷

Michelangelo Muraro has appraised the prices of Lotto's paintings mentioned in the *Libro di spese diverse* in light of the standards of living in Venice. He has stressed the importance of taking the cost of foodstuffs, clothing and accommodation into account when examining Lotto's earnings.¹⁸ In his analysis of the commissioning of Lotto's polyptych for the church of San Domenico in Giovinazzo, near Bari, painted in 1542 for 186 *lire*, Muraro has underlined that the artist had to pay 109 *lire* and 1.5 *soldi* to have the frame carved and gilded, and for production material such as linoleum canvas, gesso

¹⁶ Francesco De Carolis, 'Il *Libro di spese diverse* di Lorenzo Lotto. Analisi e commento,' P.h.D. thesis (University of Bologna 2015), pp. 29-30, 32, 67. On the technical and industrial innovation fostered by Renaissance merchants, see Luca Molà, 'Il mercante innovatore,' in *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa* (2007), vol. 4, pp. 623-653; Id., 'Inventors, Patents and the Market for Innovations in Renaissance Italy,' *History of Technology* 32 (2014), pp. 7-34.

¹⁷ Raymond de Roover, 'The Development of Accounting Prior to Luca Pacioli According to the Account-Books of Medieval Merchants,' in *Studies in the History of Accounting*, eds Ananias Charles Littleton and Basil Selig Yamey (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin, 1956), pp. 114-184; Basil Selig Yamey, *Essays on the History of Accounting* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), pp. xvii-xxvi; Matthew (2006), p. 308; Francesco Guidi Bruscoli, 'Le tecniche bancarie,' in *Il Rinascimento italiano e l'Europa* (2007), vol. 4, pp. 554-557.

¹⁸ Michelangelo Muraro, 'I conti in tasca a Lorenzo Lotto,' *Notizie da Palazzo Albani* 13 (1984), p. 149.

ground for the priming, glue, paper, varnish and nails.¹⁹ Muraro's calculation of Lotto's revenue from this commission, 76 *lire* and 18 *soldi*, is particularly useful, given that documents do not always provide enough evidence to compute the expenses for production material and labour defrayed by artists. Muraro has also specified that Lotto provided pigments and used his paint brushes and other workshop material, which means that his revenue of 76 *lire* and 18 *soldi* is approximate.²⁰

Peter Humfrey has mentioned two similar examples which prove that, in some cases, Renaissance artists gained only a part of the overall price paid for their works. First, in 1440, Michele Giambono and his carpenter Paolo di Amedeo were requested to take charge of the risks and costs of shipping their polyptych to the church of San Michele in San Daniele del Friuli. Patrons, according to Humfrey, usually covered the expenses for transportation and installation of altarpieces when it was easy to move them by water, which implied lower costs. The second example cited by Humfrey is the commission of Lotto's altarpiece of *St Lucy before the Judge*, painted in 1532 for the church of San Floriano in Jesi, near Ancona [Fig. 231]. Since Lotto agreed to act as his own contractor, Humfrey has hypothesised that the painter received no more than around a third of the 220 ducats paid for the work, given that the remaining two thirds were probably absorbed by the expenses for the collaboration of craftsmen.²¹

Yet both Muraro and Humfrey have compared Renaissance artists' earnings simply with the Venetian wage level. As regards the *Giovinazzo Altarpiece*, Muraro has argued that Lotto, during the six months he was given to

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 155.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 156.

²¹ Humfrey (1993), p. 153.

finish the altarpiece, was paid the paltry sum of 9 *soldi* per day, which was half of the daily salary averaged by a Venetian workman in the 1540s.²² Lotto, in fact, worked both in Venice and Treviso during the 1540s and spent part of his life in the Marches and Bergamo. This implies that painters' earnings should be compared to the wage level and job categories of the places in which they worked, in line with their mobility. Likewise, Peter Humfrey has collated the wages of painters and other categories of workers, from master masons and carpenters working at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco to the notaries and secretaries of the Venetian Chancellery. In doing so, he has surmised that painters can be placed somewhere in the middle of the social ladder. The focus, however, is once again on artists who worked in Venice, such as Giovanni Bellini, whose annual income of 120 ducats from the Fondaco de' Tedeschi equalled the annual wage of Antonio Rizzo, the designated *proto* of the building works at the Doge's Palace in 1484. Humfrey has also pointed out that less famous painters, such as Francesco Bissolo and Vincenzo dai Destri, received in Venice approximately the annual salary of master craftsmen employed by the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in the mid-sixteenth century.²³ Dai Destri, who was native of Treviso, had his business partly centred in the *terraferma*, where the cost of living was lower than in Venice.²⁴ This entails that drawing comparisons between this painter's overall income from painting and Venetian workers' earnings does not provide a full picture of his financial situation.

²² Muraro (1984), pp. 149, 155.

²³ Peter Humfrey, 'The Venetian Altarpiece of the Early Renaissance in the Light of Contemporary Business Practice,' *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 15 (1986), p. 70.

²⁴ Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 306.

The Venice-oriented assessment criteria used by Muraro and Humfrey in their calculation of the earnings of artists working in Venice stem from scholars' long-standing tendency to employ a "Venetian" vantage point when assessing art in Renaissance Veneto. By contrast, a correct calculation of artists' income should consider the financial situation of the Venetian mainland, where, as noted earlier, the cost of living was lower than in Venice. A non-Venetian perspective may indeed be more appropriate to assess artists who spent most of their lives in the *terraferma* or outside the Venetian Republic, as in the case of Lotto.

In contrast to his assessment of Lotto's earnings from painting, in his critical edition of the *Libro secondo di dare ed avere della famiglia Da Ponte*, an account book compiled by Francesco and Jacopo Bassano between 1511 and 1588, Muraro has taken a non-Venetian perspective. He is indeed one of the very few scholars who has contrasted the Bassano's income from painting with the average stipends of other categories of workers from the same geographical area in the Venetian mainland, Bassano del Grappa. More to the point, he has stressed that the average price of 11 ducats for an unframed altarpiece painted in the Bassano's shop was somewhat paltry in comparison to the daily salaries received in Bassano by labourers, carpenters and blacksmiths. It should be remembered that the price of altarpieces normally varied according to three factors: the number of full-length figures in the composition, the time that the artist took to complete the work, and the quality of materials. Works of art made in Renaissance Bassano, according to Muraro, were still subject to conservative methods of valuation.²⁵ In fact, traditional pricing methods were

²⁵ Francesco and Jacopo da Ponte (1992), pp. 14-15, 18. Muraro has pointed out that, in sixteenth-century Bassano, a blacksmith or a carpenter earned between 16 and 20 *soldi* per day, whilst a labourer averaged 12 to 15 *soldi*. Muraro has also mentioned that the average price for

not used in the *terraferma* only, as they were still implemented in late sixteenth-century Venice. For instance, on 27 August 1588, Tintoretto received 105 ducats for depicting fifteen figures in cartoons for the Scuola Grande di San Marco, and, on the same day, 49 ducats for seven other figures. In other words, the painter was still adhering to a set of long-standing criteria by consistently charging 7 ducats per figure.²⁶

A keen interest in Renaissance artists' revenue from painting arose in the 1990s with publications of various types. A key work is certainly *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice*, in which Peter Humfrey has provided a remarkable amount of prices paid for Venetian altarpieces between 1450 and 1530. Humfrey, like Muraro, has pointed out that the number of figures and time of execution were two major criteria employed in Renaissance Venice to set the price of a painting, alongside the artist's reputation and quality of the finished work.²⁷ Three examples are quoted by Humfrey in this regard. First, the valuation of Vincenzo dai Destri's *St Erasmus Altarpiece* [Fig. 232], done in 1503 by the painters Pier Maria Pennacchi and Lorenzo Lotto. Humfrey's contention is that the set price of 36 ducats, of which 24 ducats for the three full-length figures (8 ducats per figure) and 12 ducats for the lost frame and predella, depended on the low regard in which Lotto and Pennacchi held dai Destri, a minor Bellinesque painter. Humfrey has also argued that, had Vincenzo dai Destri painted a *sacra conversazione*, which would have meant adding musical angels in the composition, he would have fared much better.²⁸

an unframed panel by the Bassano was around 70 *lire*, against the 400 *lire* usually paid for their framed paintings.

²⁶ Michel Hochmann, *Peintres et commanditaires à Venise (1540-1628)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1992), pp. 22-23.

²⁷ It should be remembered that the money invested by patrons in Renaissance Italy has been regarded by scholars as a useful means of gauging both artists' reputation and skill. On this, see O'Malley (2005), pp. 150-151, 158.

²⁸ Humfrey (1993), pp. 152-153.

As regards Bartolomeo Montagna's *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist, Jerome and Three Musical Angels*, painted in 1490 for the Pavia Certosa, a correct understanding of its price of 326 *lire* (around 70 ducats) calls for a distinction between full-length and half-length figures in the composition [Fig. 14]. If the Virgin and Sts John the Baptist and Jerome are full-length figures, the three angels and Christ Child, who are considerably smaller than the other figures, should count either as four half-length figures or two full-length figures, which amounts to a total of five full-length figures. This suggests that each figure cost 65,2 *lire* (around 14 ducats), although we do not know whether the price included the cost of the frame. This valuation criterion may be useful to understand why Ambrogio Bergognone's works for the Certosa cost considerably more than Montagna's altarpiece. The 500 *lire* (around 107,5 ducats) spent on Bergognone's *Crucifixion* might depend on the higher number of figures in the composition, in which six full-length figures and numerous flying angels around Christ are depicted [Fig. 87]. However, in the *St Ambrose Altarpiece*, which cost 480 *lire* (around 103 ducats), Bergognone depicted only five figures (96 *lire*/c. 20 ducats per figure), fewer than those in Montagna's *Certosa di Pavia Altarpiece* [Figs 14, 88]. The higher value of Bergognone's works might be indicative, as argued by Luke Syson, of the high regard in which the painter was held at the Certosa, where he is first recorded in 1488.²⁹ Before receiving the commission of the *St Ambrose* and *St Syrus Altarpieces* in 1490-1491 [Figs 88-89], between 1488 and 1490 Bergognone painted in the Certosa *The Virgin and Child with a Carthusian Monk and St Catherine of Siena*, now in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan [Fig. 90]. It is therefore likely that, by the time Montagna received his commission,

²⁹ Luke Syson, 'Bergognone. Pavia,' *The Burlington Magazine* 140:1145 (August 1998), p. 577.

Bergognone had already had the opportunity to showcase his ability as a painter and gain reputation in the eyes of his commissioners. Montagna, on the other hand, was probably still unknown to the Carthusian monks and unfamiliar with the Pavian artistic *milieu*. The second example mentioned by Humfrey is Cima da Conegliano's *Baptism of Christ*, painted in 1492 for the church of San Giovanni in Bragora in Venice [Fig. 233]. The relatively low sum of 80 ducats that Cima earned for this painting was due, according to Humfrey, partly to the artist's young age and not yet fully established reputation, and partly to the small number of full-length figures in the composition. Humfrey has also mentioned a similar case-in-point, the valuation criteria of Titian's *Death of St Peter Martyr*, a lost altarpiece painted between 1528 and 1530 for the Basilica of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice and reproduced by a late seventeenth-century copy by Johann Carl Loth [Fig. 28]. Despite the work being the most celebrated painting by Titian, the Dominicans of Santi Giovanni e Paolo paid as little as 100 ducats on account of the large areas of landscape in the composition, which was undervalued due to conservative pricing methods.³⁰ Humfrey's observations confirm that in Venice, as well as the *terraferma*, the price of paintings could be calculated according to a set of long-standing traditional criteria.

Reputation and experience were probably decisive factors in the setting of the prices for the frescoes painted in 1511-1512 by Montagna and Titian in the Scuola del Santo in Padua, also known as the *Scoleta*. Mauro Lucco has pointed out that a fledgeling and not yet famous Titian was paid the modest sum of 12 ducats for his fresco of *The Miracle of the Speaking Babe* [Fig. 31]. Montagna, by contrast, frescoed *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone* for 20

³⁰ Humfrey (1993), pp. 152, 155-156.

ducats [Fig. 24], which is 66.6% more than Titian's fee, despite the surface painted by Titian being only 25% smaller.³¹ This was probably because, unlike Titian, by 1511 Montagna had long established his reputation as a painter in Venice and the *terraferma*. Over the course of the sixteenth century, the Council Hall of the *Scoleta* was adorned by a pictorial cycle consisting of fifteen frescoes and three canvasses with stories from the life of St Anthony, one of the patrons of Padua, alongside saints Prosdocimus, Daniel and Justina.³² Aside from Montagna and Titian, the cycle was painted by Francesco Vecellio, Titian's brother, Filippo da Verona and the local artists Gerolamo Tessari, also known as Gerolamo dal Santo, and Gian Antonio Corona.³³ In 1509 Gian Antonio Corona was commissioned by the guardian of the confraternity and notary Marco Antonio de Coradinis and the *gastaldo* Antonius Chavalinus to fresco *St Anthony Bringing Peace to Padua*, for which he received 8 ducats [Fig. 234].³⁴ The size and number of the figures in this fresco are comparable to those of Montagna's *Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone* [Fig. 24], and both frescoes are crowded with full-length and half-length figures, let alone the numerous heads depicted in the middle ground of the composition. In spite of these similarities, Montagna was paid 20 ducats, which is more than twice as much as Corona's fee. This suggests that reputation was a determining factor for Montagna's commissioners, the guardian Nicola de Strata and his confraternity brothers, in their valuation of the artist's fresco. The high esteem

³¹ Lucco (2014), p. 84. Titian's fresco measures 340 x 355 cm, while Montagna's 287 x 441 cm.

³² Giuseppina De Sandre Gasparini (ed.), 'La confraternita di S. Antonio Confessore,' in *Statuti di confraternite religiose di Padova nel medio evo* (Padua: Istituto per la storia ecclesiastica padovana, 1974), pp. 91-153.

³³ Charles Hope, 'The Attribution of Some Paduan Paintings of the Early Sixteenth Century,' *Artibus et Historiae* 18:35 (1997), pp. 81-99.

³⁴ ASP, *Notarile*, b. 1288, Liber v Instr. Gasparis de Varottaris, fol. 67 (8 March 1509), cited in Ester Cocco, 'Pittori cinquecenteschi padovani,' *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova* 20 (1927), 3-4, p. 110; Antonio Sartori, *Archivio Sartori: documenti di storia e arte francescana*, ed. Giovanni M. Luisetto, 2 vols (Padua: Biblioteca Antoniana, Basilica del Santo, 1983), vol. 1, p. 910 number 4.

in which Montagna was held by the members of the confraternity of St Anthony can also be inferred from the highly complimentary tone for the painter in the contract of *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone* [App. 4, doct 61]. In this document, dated 6 February 1512, we read of the “celebratissima fama domini Bartholomei Montagna de Vincentia, pictoris excellentissimi...”³⁵, while in the contract of Corona’s fresco of *St Anthony Bringing Peace to Padua*, the artist is simply described as “magister,” without any reference to his reputation.³⁶ That said, when dealing with a cycle commissioned over a number of years it is important to remember that financial conditions during its creation would change, reflecting the various needs and priorities of the Scuola. Alongside the possible different importance given to some parts of the cycle, the liquidity of the client is a major variant to take into consideration. Nevertheless, the Scuola’s financial means might have been similar when it was agreed to commission the frescoes from Titian and Montagna, given that the former was employed in 1511, and the latter in 1512. The same goes for Corona, who worked for the Scuola between 1509 and 1511.³⁷

The last passage of Humfrey’s work on Venetian altarpieces that deserves attention concerns a lost *Annunciation*, painted by Titian in 1537 for the nuns of the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Murano and reproduced by a sixteenth-century engraving by Gian Giacomo Caraglio [Fig. 235]. Since the nuns apparently refused to acquiesce to Titian’s request of 500 ducats for the execution of the altarpiece, the painter offered his picture to the Empress Isabella and gained in return the astounding sum of 2,000 *scudi* (approximately

³⁵ ASP, *Notarile*, Gaspare de Salieri, b. 2700, fols 296v-297r (6 February 1512), cited in Ester Cocco, ‘L’opera di Bartolomeo Montagna nella ‘Scuola del Santo’ a Padova,’ *Nuovo archivio veneto* 18 (1914), p. 200; Sartori (1983), p. 910 number 6; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 144-145.

³⁶ ASP, *Notarile*, b. 1288, Liber v Instr. Gasparis de Varottaris, fol. 67 (8 March 1509), cited in Cocco (1927), 3-4, p. 110; Sartori (1983), p. 910.

³⁷ Hope (1997), p. 82.

2,000 ducats) from the Emperor Charles V.³⁸ Vasari's anecdote evidences the profit-driven approach to art that made Titian particularly rich in comparison to artists from previous generations and of his day.³⁹ The painter's request of 500 ducats for his *Annunciation* is five times as much as the sum he earned for the *Death of St Peter Martyr* [Fig. 28] and equal to the cost of Lotto's *Colleoni-Martinengo Altarpiece* [Fig. 80].⁴⁰ Titian's expectation of earning 500 ducats for his *Annunciation*, which features only two full-length figures, is symptomatic of his intention to capitalise on his well-established reputation and the incontestable quality of his works.

In line with Muraro and Humfrey, Tom Nichols, in his studies on Jacopo Tintoretto, has contrasted Venetian painters' earnings with the wage level of other job categories. He has underscored that the leading painters working at the Doge's Palace in the late fifteenth century, such as Giovanni Bellini, could gain up to 200 ducats per year. This sum was the average annual wage of Venetian non-noble secretaries in State employment, but it was far from approximating the remuneration of patrician castellans or *podestà*, who could earn up to 500 ducats *per annum*. Nichols has also noted that the Venetian *sensaria*, which he has incorrectly defined as the official salary of 118-120 ducats awarded exclusively to artists of exceptional merit employed at the Doge's Palace, was remarkably inferior to the princely stipend of 480 florins that Giorgio Vasari received annually at the Medici court in Florence between

³⁸ Vasari (1906, 1568 edition), vol. 7, p. 441. See also Harold Edwin Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian: Complete Edition*, 3 vols (London: Phaidon, 1969), vol. 1: *The Religious Paintings*, p. 71; Humfrey (1993), p. 156.

³⁹ Bruce Cole, 'Titian and the Idea of Originality in the Renaissance,' in *The Craft of Art. Originality and Industry in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque Workshop*, eds Andrew Ladis and Carolyn Wood (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), pp. 86, 88.

⁴⁰ Humfrey (1993), p. 155.

1556 and 1571.⁴¹ By comparing the 200 ducats that Montagna earned for painting two lost *teleri* for the Scuola Grande di San Marco in Venice in 1482 to the Venetian *sanseria*, one realises that the monetary reward received by the painter was somewhat remarkable.⁴² It should be noted that, in 1484, Montagna was able to afford a 200-ducat house in *contrada* San Lorenzo, a historical neighbourhood of Vicenza. This investment is particularly telling, considering that Jacopo Bassano purchased a house in Bassano del Grappa, north-east of Vicenza, for only 118 *lire* (around 25 ducats),⁴³ and that Lotto did not even own a house. Yet the value of Montagna's house appears insignificant in comparison to the 6000 *lire* (around 1000 ducats) spent by the ambitious sculptor Alessandro Vittoria on his house in Venice.⁴⁴ Overall, aside from his assessment of Venetian painters' income in light of the wage level of other job categories, Nichols' studies give us a deeper insight into Tintoretto's business mindset and his shrewd response to clients' demand. In particular, Tintoretto's catering to demand through a streamlined artistic output and low pricing strategy are objects of Nichols' detailed investigation.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Tom Nichols, 'Price, *Prestezza* and Production in Jacopo Tintoretto's Business Strategy,' *Venezia Cinquecento: studi di storia dell'arte e della cultura* 6:12 (1996), p. 208; Id., *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity* (London: Reaktion, 1999), p. 101. It must be pointed out that Nichols' definition of the Venetian *sanseria* is incorrect. For an appropriate reconstruction of the origin, development and implications of this payment system, see Charles Hope, 'Titian's role as official painter to the Venetian Republic,' in *Tiziano e Venezia: convegno internazionale di studi, Venezia, 27 settembre – 1 ottobre 1976*, ed. Neri Pozza (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1980), p. 304: "At the beginning of the sixteenth century there did not exist a convention in Venice by which one artist was singled out and granted a *sanseria* in recognition of his exceptional merit. Nor did the possession of a *sanseria* impose an obligation to produce a portrait of the reigning Doge. On the contrary, a grant of this kind was the normal method of paying the artists engaged on the repainting of the history cycle in the Sala del Gran Consiglio, and it had the practical advantage of not imposing any direct burden on government funds." Hence, Hope has convincingly challenged Francesco Sansovino's and Vasari's unreliable references to the *sanseria*.

⁴² ASVe, *Scuola Grande di San Marco, Atti*, b. 16 bis (1428-1523), fol. 6v (23 February 1483), cited in Paoletti (1894), pp. 11-12; Borenius (1912), p. 215 doct 1; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 119.

⁴³ Francesco and Jacopo da Ponte (1992), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁴ Muraro (1984), p. 157; Victoria Avery, 'The House of Alessandro Vittoria Reconstructed,' *Sculpture Journal* 5 (2001), p. 10.

⁴⁵ Nichols (1996), p. 222.

The studies of Muraro, Humfrey and Nichols have been discussed for their assessment of Renaissance artists' earnings and socioeconomic status. Their methodology, based on the comparison between artists' revenue from artistic commissions and the average salaries received by different categories of workers and members of various strata, has been used by Philip Sohm and Richard Spear. Sohm and Spear have indeed contrasted the mean wages of artists working in early Seicento Venice, especially the painters who were in charge of the pictorial decoration of the Doge's Palace, with the stipends earned by grammar school teachers or chancellery notaries and secretaries.⁴⁶ A similar approach is also found in John Garton's recent study on Veronese's "art of business," in which he has contrasted artists' earnings with the annual income of Venetian chancellery notaries, secretaries and grammar school teachers.⁴⁷ Garton has also pointed out that the value of Veronese's properties ranged from 681 to 7,200 ducats, which was around sixty times the annual stipend of a mid-level military manager in the Venetian Arsenale.⁴⁸ In this case, a Venetian perspective, whose usefulness I have previously challenged when the artist worked mainly in the *terraferma* or outside the Venetian Republic, is appropriate, in that Veronese spent most of his career in Venice.

In conclusion, the studies discussed in this section provide useful insights into key economic aspects of Renaissance art, especially the monetary value of works of art, and artists' business mindset and socioeconomic status. Yet scholarship of Bartolomeo Montagna has neglected these aspects, which emerge from my analysis of the painter's real estate transactions and artistic career.

⁴⁶ Spear and Sohm (2010), p. 220.

⁴⁷ John Garton, 'Paolo Veronese's Art of Business: Painting, Investment, and the Studio as Social Nexus,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 65:3 (2012), p. 775.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 775 note 71.

3.2 Montagna's Socioeconomic Status

This section is concerned with the impact of Montagna's landownership on the making of his socioeconomic status, with the historical and economic context in which his real estate activities took place, and with his social ties and relationship with Vicenza and the Vicentino.

A similar investigation has already been carried out by Lionello Puppi on Paolo Veronese, particularly on the painter's decision to invest in land in the Venetian mainland for the purpose of enhancing his social standing.⁴⁹ According to Puppi, Veronese's pursuit of land in the *terraferma* was part of a crucial shift from maritime commerce to landownership in the history of the Venetian economy, which climaxed between 1580 and 1630, when the majority of Venetian-owned land in the *terraferma* was owned by the nobility.⁵⁰ Venetian patricians opted for landownership not only as it was a low-risk business, but also because it represented a valid, if less profitable, alternative to the more stressful seafaring trade.⁵¹ Yet Venetians' penetration in the Vicentino during the Quattrocento was very limited, and it was not until the late 1510s that it gained ground, as indicated by the local *estimi*.⁵² Indeed, Venetians purchased

⁴⁹ Lionello Puppi, 'Guadagnare e investire. Riflessioni a margine di alcuni documenti inediti su Paolo Veronese,' in *Venezia e venezie. Descrizioni, interpretazioni, immagini*, eds Fabrizio Borin and Filippo Pedrocco (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2003), p. 67: "La congiuntura storica vede il compimento del *virage* dell'economia veneziana dai traffici mercantili alle attività fondiari, col mutamento conseguente di mentalità e costumi. Il "gentiluomo [cittadino] di molto splendore," per usar espressioni di Palladio, si trasforma in "gentiluomo" di campagna. E di più, in accordo con la trattatistica, sempre più abbondante e vistosa, sull'agricoltura, connotato di vera nobiltà è: "comprar terre" e "star in villa," non solo per "governare le [proprie] possessioni." Potremmo inscrivere l'atteggiamento del Veronese in siffatta attitudine e coglierlo quale risposta alla tensione di distinguersi e nobilitarsi sul piano della dignità sociale? Io lo credo."

⁵⁰ Richard T. Rapp, 'Real Estate and Rational Investment in Early Modern Venice,' *The Journal of European Economic History* 8:2 (1979), p. 270 note 3.

⁵¹ On Venetian landownership in the Vicentino during the fifteenth century, see James Grubb, 'Patriciate and Estimo in the Vicentine Quattrocento,' in *Il sistema fiscale veneto: problemi e aspetti, XV-XVIII secolo; atti della prima giornata di studio sulla terraferma veneta* (Verona: Libreria Universitaria, 1982), pp. 163-164; Michelangelo Muraro and Paolo Marton, *Venetian Villas* (Köln: Könemann, 1986), pp. 67-80.

⁵² Grubb (1982), p. 164; Bianchi and Demo (2014), p. 107.

land particularly in the Paduan villages of Camposampiero, Mirano, Oriago, Camponogara, Bovolenta and Noventa, on account of their proximity to Venice.⁵³ This certainly facilitated the land acquisitions of the burgeoning urban classes of Vicenza in and around the city during the Quattrocento and early Cinquecento. This pursuit of land began in the fourteenth century, when especially urban families that had recently strengthened their socioeconomic status profited from commerce, money lending and landownership, at the expense of peasants who lost their lands for incurring debt.⁵⁴ By 1404 a few major families and religious corporations owned the majority of land in Vicenza and its surroundings,⁵⁵ although the passage of Vicentine land in the hands of urban classes increased in the second half of the fifteenth century and early sixteenth century.⁵⁶ During this period Montagna, who is often defined in notarial deeds as “cive et habitatore Vicentie,”⁵⁷ was among the numerous citizens who set out to buy land in the countryside. Landownership in Quattrocento and early Cinquecento Vicenza thus has to be seen primarily as an urban phenomenon which was facilitated by the feeble presence of Venetian landowners in the province and sprang from a progressive dispossession of real property from peasants. These are the favourable conditions in which Montagna had operated as a land investor and manager since the 1480s.

The purchase of real estate was not entirely restricted to the upper ranks of society. Renaissance artists, who usually belonged to the lower or middle

⁵³ Gian Maria Varanini, ‘Il Rinascimento. Società ed Economia - Il Lavoro. La Ricchezza. Le Coesistenze: Proprietà Fondiaria e Agricoltura,’ in *Storia di Venezia: dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, eds Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, 8 vols (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1996), vol. 5, p. 814.

⁵⁴ Bianchi and Demo (2014), p. 106.

⁵⁵ Grubb (1982), p. 149.

⁵⁶ Bianchi and Demo (2014), p. 107.

⁵⁷ ASVi, *Notarile*, Giovanni Antonio Gallo, b. 5042, fol. 55, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 109.

classes, invested in property, such as houses and farms, and land. Michelangelo is undoubtedly the artist whose real estate activities have most thoroughly been investigated, on account of his numerous surviving letters in which he anxiously recorded the development of his negotiations. In a letter sent on 15 October 1547 from Rome to his nephew Lionardo di Buonarroto Simoni, Michelangelo stated that he did not know “of any family in Florence that has prospered by other means than the possession of landed property.”⁵⁸ This assertion is indicative of the importance which Michelangelo attached to landownership, as also attested by the extensive acquisitions of real estate he irregularly made in and around Florence from 1505 until late in his life.⁵⁹

In the Venetian Republic, investments in real estate were primarily meant to supplement their income from artistic commissions, and strengthen their social standing and ties with a specific area of the *terraferma*. Among the artists who, like Montagna, invested in real estate in the Venetian Republic were Palma Vecchio, Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, Paris Bordon and Francesco Bassano. Palma Vecchio owned real estate in his hometown of Serina, near Bergamo, as well as in Montagnana, near Padua;⁶⁰ Tintoretto owned a house and eight *campi* in Carpenedo, near Mestre;⁶¹ Paris Bordon inherited lands in Lovadina, near Treviso, from his mother Angelica;⁶² and Francesco Bassano

⁵⁸ Carolyn Vaughan, *Michelangelo's Notebooks: The Poetry, Letters, and Art of the Great Master* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2016), p. 247.

⁵⁹ Rab Hatfield, *The Wealth of Michelangelo* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2002), p. 228.

⁶⁰ ASBg, *Notarile, Bonadeo fu Bernardino de Lavallo*, b. 905, cited in Fornoni (1886), pp. 39-40; Rylands (1992), pp. 16, 23, 337; ASVe, *Dieci Savi sopra le Decime a Rialto, Condizioni* 1514, San Stae, b. 69, n. 55, cited in Cheney (1872-1876), p. 75 (facsimile); Mikelli (1875), pp. 3-57; Ludwig (1903), p. 66; Molmenti (1927-1929), vol. 2, p. 133; Rylands (1992), pp. 23, 336-337.

⁶¹ ASVe, *Savi alle decime*, b. 162, n. 293, cited in Carlo Ridolfi, *Vite dei Tintoretto: da Le meraviglie dell'arte, ovvero, le vite degli illustri pittori veneti e dello stato*, ed. Giovanni Keller (Venice: Filippi, 1994), p. 128; Garton (2012), p. 778.

⁶² AST, *Archivio Notarile*, b. 388, Atti di Francesco Biadene, Protocollo 4 gennaio 1523 - 3 dicembre 1524, fols 131r-132v, cited in Luigi Bailo and Gerolamo Biscaro, *Della vita e delle opere di Paris Bordon* (Treviso: Luigi Zoppelli, 1900), pp. 18, 19, 86 doct 5; BCT, MS 1410, fol. 1; Giordana Mariani Canova, *Paris Bordon* (Venice: Alfieri, 1964), p. 69; Giorgio Fossaluzza, 'Codice diplomatico bordoniano,' in *Paris Bordon* (exhibition catalogue, Palazzo dei Trecento,

bought a property in Romano d'Ezzelino, in the province of Vicenza, on 3 February 1578 for 3100 ducats,⁶³ and fifty-three *campi* at the “villa della Fossà in contrà delle Fellette,” near Romano d'Ezzelino, on 30 August 1591 for 3585 ducats.⁶⁴ Titian and Veronese are the Renaissance artists from the Veneto whose investment strategies have more thoroughly been investigated. Titian owned land near Conegliano and Serravalle, two towns in the Trevigiano,⁶⁵ although recent studies on his business have been concerned mainly with the reconstruction of his timber trade.⁶⁶ A different and more inspiring approach has been taken by Giorgio Tagliaferro in his recent study on Titian's altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child in Glory with Sts Andrew and Peter*, commissioned in 1542 by the Consiglio Maggiore for the duomo of Serravalle [Fig. 236]. Tagliaferro has demonstrated that the investment strategies used by the painter to settle in that area were aimed at strengthening his social and professional status as much as his family's financial condition. Since the early 1540s, Titian had indeed gone to great lengths to have his first son, Pomponio, appointed canon of the abbey of San Pietro in Colle, which was not accidentally located near his lands in Col di Manza, in the surroundings of Serravalle and Ceneda.⁶⁷ Between 1548 and 1549, Titian built a countryside house in Col di Manza on ten *campi* purchased a few years before and originally registered in the name of his

Treviso, September 1984 – December 1984), ed. Eugenio Manzato (Milan: Electa, 1984), p. 125.

⁶³ Giuseppe Gerola, 'I testamenti di Francesco il Giovane e di Gerolamo da Ponte,' *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Bassano* 2 (1905), p. 105; cited in Livia Alberton Vinco da Sesso and Franco Signori, 'Il testamento di Jacopo dal Ponte detto Bassano,' *Arte Veneta* 33 (1979), p. 163; Garton (2012), p. 778.

⁶⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Alessandro Como*, Bassano, 1591, 30 August, cited in Alberton Vinco da Sesso and Signori (1979), p. 163; Garton (2012), p. 778.

⁶⁵ Giuseppe Cadorin, *Dello amore ai veneziani di Tiziano Vecellio, delle sue case in Cadore e in Venezia e delle vite de' suoi figli* (Venice: C. Hopfner, 1833), pp. 91-92 (From the *decima* of 28 June 1566).

⁶⁶ For instance, see Lionello Puppi, *Su Tiziano* (Milan: Skira, 2004), pp. 46-48; Id., 'Tiziano e il commercio del legname,' in *Lungo le vie di Tiziano: i luoghi e le opere di Tiziano, Francesco, Orazio e Marco Vecellio tra Vittorio Veneto e il Cadore*, ed. Marta Mazza (Milan: Skira, 2007), pp. 96-99.

⁶⁷ Giorgio Tagliaferro, 'La pala di Serravalle e la congiuntura degli anni '40,' *Venezia Cinquecento: studi di storia dell'arte e della cultura* 18:35 (2008), pp. 47-48.

brother Francesco Vecellio.⁶⁸ Another strategy used by Titian in 1555 to settle in that area of the Trevigiano was marrying his daughter Lavinia to Cornelio Sarcinelli, who belonged to a noble family of Serravalle.⁶⁹ Tagliaferro has also discussed two commissions that reveal the painter's interest in settling in the area of Col di Manza: the triptych of *The Virgin and Child with Sts Peter and Paul*, commissioned in 1543 and completed in 1548-1549 for the church of Santi Pietro e Paolo in Castello Roganzuolo, and the polyptych for the church of Santa Maria Assunta in Lentiai, painted after 1549-1551 [Figs 237-238]. The Luminaria provided the painter with the necessary manpower and building material for the construction of his house in the nearby Col di Manza as partial payment for the Castello Roganzuolo triptych.⁷⁰ Despite the reward not fitting into the two traditional payment methods, in cash or kind, through which commissioners paid Renaissance artists, the Luminaria's payment stands testament to its awareness of Titian's business in the Trevigiano. By analysing these commissions, especially Titian's plans behind them, Tagliaferro has demonstrated that the painter's artistic commissions and non-artistic business could be strictly interwoven.

Letters and notarial deeds provide evidence of Veronese's wealth and business acumen. For instance, on 24 October 1562 Francesco Barbarella of Castelfranco, Veronese's proctor, purchased several *campi* in San Martino di Lupari, in the province of Padua, on the painter's behalf for the remarkable sum of 200 gold *scudi*, while on 23 November 1562 the artist spent 100 ducats

⁶⁸ ASCViVe, Serravalle, serie 8, b. 160, fol. 37v; ASCViVe, Serravalle, serie 8, b. 163, fol. 217v, cited in Tagliaferro (2008), p. 49. On Titian's house in Col di Manza, see Elena Svalduz, 'Per il politico di Castello Roganzuolo: la casa de messer Tician in Col de Manza,' in *Lungo le vie di Tiziano* (2007), pp. 42-48; Ead., 'Tiziano, la casa in Col di Manza e la pala di Castello Roganzuolo,' *Studi tizianeschi* 5 (2007), pp. 97-111; Tagliaferro (2008), p. 49.

⁶⁹ Tagliaferro (2008), p. 49.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

on some *campi* “in regola Ramoni”, near Castelfranco Veneto.⁷¹ Donata Battilotti has linked these large investments with the artist’s earnings from the commission of the fresco cycle in the Villa Barbaro in Maser, near Treviso.⁷² A direct connection between Veronese’s revenue from art and its reinvestment into real estate has also been posited by Lionello Puppi, who maintained that when in 1586 Veronese spent 500 ducats on the reclamation of some lands near Ravenna, the artist was reinvesting the recent earnings gained by making a series of ten paintings for the Duke of Buckingham. In light of this, Puppi argued that Veronese was driven by a profit-seeking behaviour, inasmuch as painting was for him a means of generating liquid assets to reinvest into land.⁷³ Further insights into Veronese’s business affairs can be gained from a letter, dated 20 March 1578, in which the painter informed his agent Marcantonio Gandino that he had been unable to invest 7,200 ducats in some plots of land on account of the unreliable behaviour of the seller, Mr Bollani. In the letter, the artist also relates that he had attempted to buy forty *campi* in the area of Piombino Dese, near Padua, from a widow, and that he was gathering information on two plots, each valued at 7,000 ducats, located in Monselice,

⁷¹ ASVi, *Notarile, Castelfranco, atti Gio. Batta Dotto*, b. 31, c. 277, cited in Donata Battilotti, ‘Villa Barbaro a Maser: un difficile cantiere,’ *Storia dell’arte* 53 (1985), p. 45; ASVi, *Notarile, Castelfranco, atti Francesco Dotto*, b. 84, c. 40v, cited in Battilotti (1985), p. 45. The gold *scudo* was first minted in Venice in the early sixteenth century and its value during the middle of the sixteenth century was 6 *lire* 16 *soldi*, that is almost the same value as the Venetian ducat (6 *lire* 4 *soldi*). On the value of the gold *scudo* in mid-sixteenth century Venice, see the third book of the *General trattato de’ numeri et misure*, written in 1556 by the Brescian mathematician Niccolò Tartaglia, in Niccolò Tartaglia, *Tutte l’opere d’arithmetica del famosissimo Nicolò Tartaglia* (Venice: All’insegna del Leone, 1592-1593), p. 59.

⁷² Battilotti (1985), p. 45.

⁷³ Puppi (2003), pp. 64-66. It is worth quoting Puppi’s description of Veronese’s business mindset: “Tanto meticolosa cura, tuttavia, nel mettere a profitto il danaro guadagnato appartiene ad una mentalità, a suo modo e in una certa qual misura, imprenditoriale: non scaturisce da taccagneria o avidità. Il lavoro – e apparterrà pure alla sfera delle arti liberali – è, comunque, lavoro: rende in danaro e, questo, non va immobilizzato ma investito là dove possa lievitare, accrescersi.” (p. 66). Puppi also defined sixteenth-century Veneto workshops, among which Paolo Farinati’s *bottega*, as “capitalistic enterprises” which aimed at generating a surplus from artistic commissions to reinvest into real estate. On this, see Farinati (1968), pp. 39-40.

near Padua, and between Marghera and Mestre, near Venice.⁷⁴ A notarial deed, drawn up on 3 October 1581, also attests that Veronese purchased twenty-one *campi* with a house in Sant'Angelo, near Treviso, for the remarkable sum of 115 ducats per *campo* from the noble Francesco Vonico.⁷⁵ The painter's strong interest in this area of the Trevigiano is proven by three more documents. The first two, drafted on 7 and 17 March 1582, record his purchase of other six *campi* in Sant'Angelo for 650 ducats from Guglielmo Ravagnini,⁷⁶ while a third document, drafted on 9 August 1582, informs us that Veronese was renting out forty-five *campi* in the same town.⁷⁷

If landownership, alongside strategic family policies, was for Titian primarily a means of settling and consolidating his socioeconomic status in the Trevigiano, for Veronese it was a way of profiting from rental income, which could be reinvested in land or other business activities.⁷⁸ Turning a profit⁷⁹ by charging rent in cash or kind, which helped sustain one's lifestyle,⁸⁰ seems to have been the main purpose of Montagna's real estate activities (App. 2), as suggested by two notarial deeds. The first, drafted on 7 October 1488, informs us that Montagna leased nine *campi* in Orzinuovi to Giorgio Corniani for 22 *lire* per year for six years, which means that the overall income might have been

⁷⁴ The letter is held in New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 2061, available at <http://corsair.themorgan.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?SC=Author&SA=Gandini%2C%20Marcantonio%2C%2015501630%2C&PID=ZV32zbEC7OAYGyPwH6tRU9pOxQB2&BROWS E=1&HC=2&SID=3> (last visited 20 January 2018); cited in Andrea Erboso, 'La bottega di Paolo Veronese: documenti e contesti per Benedetto Caliari,' MA Dissertation (Università Ca' Foscari 2011-2012), p. 52.

⁷⁵ ASVe, *Archivio Notarile. Atti*, b. 3299, cited in Erboso (2011-2012), p. 45.

⁷⁶ ASVe, *Notarile, Marcantonio Cavanis*, b. 3300, cited in Terisio Pignatti, *Veronese* (Venice: Alfieri, 1976), pp. 258-259, docs 59-60; Puppi (2003), p. 63.

⁷⁷ ASVe, *Dieci Savii sopra le Decime Rialto - estimo 1582*, cited in Pignatti (1976), pp. 258-259, doc. 61; Puppi (2003), p. 63.

⁷⁸ Puppi (2003), p. 64; Garton (2012), pp. 774-775.

⁷⁹ The word "profit" refers to the economic surplus, that is Montagna's income in cash or kind which exceeds the amount he invested.

⁸⁰ Grubb (1996), p. 136.

132 *lire*, that is around 28 ducats (App. 4, doct 24).⁸¹ The second deed, drawn up on 20 May 1508, mentions that Montagna rented out some plots of land in Monteviale to Francesco, son of the late Iorio of Monteviale, for 9.5 *staia*⁸² of wheat per year for ten years (App. 4, doct 56).⁸³ In other words, the artist might have gained a remarkable crop income of 95 *staia* of wheat, that is between 1900 and 2185 kg of wheat in ten years. The in-kind payments that Montagna received from his tenants consisted not only of *staia* of wheat, but also *mastelli* of wine. Both wheat and wine were subject to Venetian regulations, as they could only be destined for the market of Venice,⁸⁴ yet we do not know whether Montagna traded these products or simply kept them for personal use. There is evidence, however, that some painters in Renaissance Florence⁸⁵ and the Veneto occasionally resold their in-kind income. Lotto, for example, recorded in his *Libro di spese diverse* that he had tasked a glassmaker in Venice with selling for cash glassware that he had received from another *vetrier* as partial payment for a work of art.⁸⁶ Similarly, Jacopo Bassano re-sold a case of soap in Bassano that he had received from Venice as downpayment for a picture of the Nativity.⁸⁷

⁸¹ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 94-95, 105-106; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 125-126.

⁸² It must be noted that, in the archival documents which mention Montagna's purchase and leaseback loans, *staio* or *staro*, and *staia* or *staria*, are respectively the singular and plural forms used to indicate the amount of wheat paid as in-kind rent. In this thesis I shall use the singular form *staio* and the plural form *staia*. A *staio* was a cone-shaped container, whose height was just over 20 cm and its capacity ranged between 20 and 23 kg. For further reference, see Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 99.

⁸³ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1508," fols [1-2], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 98, 110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 141.

⁸⁴ Mantese (1964b), vol. 3:2, p. 614. In particular, Mantese mentions a 1488 regulation, with which the doge Agostino Barbarigo imposed that the wheat produced in the Vicentino could be exported to the Venetian market only.

⁸⁵ On Florentine painters' practice to resell goods received as partial payment for works of art in fifteenth-century Florence, see Thomas (1995), p. 205.

⁸⁶ Lotto (2003), pp. 184-185 fols 132v-133; Matthew (2006), p. 310.

⁸⁷ Francesco and Jacopo da Ponte (1992), pp. 222-223 (1541-1542); Matthew (2006), p. 310.

Montagna's map of agrarian investments is instrumental in gaining an insight into his interest in spreading his investments across as many suburban and non-urban areas of the Vicentino as possible. Since his rental properties cover a broad geographical area of the *terraferma*, it is necessary, for the sake of clarity, to differentiate the suburban areas of Vicenza from the small towns and villages scattered across the Vicentino.⁸⁸ The former are Borgo Berga, Borgo di Porta Nuova and San Lazzaro, which are situated in the west of Vicenza, while the latter are Montebello Vicentino, Montecchio Maggiore and Brendola, located in the south-west of Vicenza, Monteviale and Costabissara, in the west/north-west, Ospedaletto in the north-east, Secula and Longare in the south-east, and Camisano Vicentino in the east (App. 1). Although Montagna's land investments appear to have come to a standstill between 1484 and 1488,⁸⁹ he purchased a large number of lands between 1488 and 1489. These were scattered across the periphery of Vicenza and the Vicentino, notably in Montecchio Maggiore, Ospedaletto, Borgo Berga, Montebello Vicentino and Borgo di Porta Nuova.

In light of this, it can be argued that Montagna deemed the *terraferma* his ideal investment avenue, and his real estate activities, as well as the multiple artistic commissions carried out in Vicenza and nearby towns, helped him preserve and reinforce his connection with the Vicentino. For instance, making long-term loans or granting extensions of a *francation* period, as done by

⁸⁸ See Mantese (1964b), vol. 3:2, pp. 15-16, part 6 of the main index. In the index, Mantese draws a distinction between the churches of the "città propriamente detta" and those of the "borghi Berga, S. Felice, Portanova, Pusterla and S. Pietro." We infer from this differentiation that "borghi" were neighbourhoods located around the city centre, where some of the main religious buildings of Vicenza were. Mantese has also specified that the urban periphery covers an area which can be up to 6-7 km distant from the city centre (p. 663). In light of this, villages such as Monteviale and Costabissara, which are both 8.5 km distant from Vicenza, cannot be deemed suburban districts.

⁸⁹ I have not been able to come by any documents attesting to Montagna's investments between 10 April 1484 and 25 November 1488.

Montagna on 13 February 1494 when he extended Meneghino di Arcugnano's rental contract by four years,⁹⁰ could be socially as well as financially convenient (App. 4, doct 39). By resorting to debt and credit networks, lenders nourished and strengthened social ties with their borrowers and acquired new clients, in accordance with a social use of economic transactions that was peculiar to Mediterranean towns in the Renaissance.⁹¹ Lenders also accrued honour from owning real estate and providing credit or property,⁹² and landownership had been an indispensable means of earning social status since the late Middle Ages.⁹³ It is therefore necessary to assess Montagna's interest-bearing loans in light of the social benefits deriving from the debtor/creditor relationship. Lending money at interest to his borrowers, who were usually artisans, such as the goldsmith Pietro, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, the cobbler Bernardino of Arzignano, and the haberdasher Giovanni Antonio,⁹⁴ certainly enabled Montagna to gain honour and expand his social network (App. 4, docs 8, 28, 29).

Scholars of Montagna, however, have seldom sought to pinpoint the determining factors in the making of his socioeconomic status by placing his business in the historical and economic context of Vicenza between the

⁹⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 106-107, 114; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 130-131.

⁹¹ John Davis, *People of the Mediterranean: An Essay in Comparative Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 52; Ronald F. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York; London: Academic Press, 1982), pp. 35-40; Id., 'The Importance of Being Ambiguous: Social Relations, Individualism, and Identity in Renaissance Florence,' in *Urban Life in the Renaissance*, eds Susan Zimmerman and Ronald F. E. Weissman (Newark; London: University of Delaware Press, 1989), pp. 276-278; Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University, 1993), pp. 110-132; Grubb (1996), p. 152.

⁹² Weissman (1989), p. 277.

⁹³ Camesasca (1969), p. 206 note 12: "[...] l'investimento in terreni realizzava l'idea di ricchezza propria del mondo antico, e insomma era il solo che conferisse una elevata dignità sociale."

⁹⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Giovanni Antonio Gallo*, b. 5042, fol. 55, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 109; ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5300, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128; ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5102, fol. 64, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 94, 107; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 127.

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The economy and standard of living of Vicenza and the Vicentino began to increase considerably from the start of the Quattrocento due to a number of factors: a steadier political situation beginning with the submission of the city to the Venetian Republic in 1404, which followed the plight caused by previous conflicts between Vicenza, Padua and Verona; the reclamation of wide areas of the Vicentino, which increased crop production; and the thriving local manufacture and commerce of wool, silk, linen, leather, ceramics and so forth.⁹⁵ It is in light of the increased agricultural productivity and burgeoning textile manufacturing in Vicenza that Montagna's real estate activities and his brother Giovanni's cloth trade need to be assessed. The extensive crop production in the Vicentino accounts for the numerous and sometimes substantial in-kind payments which Montagna received from his borrowers (App. 4, doct 56). The development of wool manufacturing in Vicenza and the role of Venice as a major marketplace of fabrics explain why Montagna's brother Giovanni, who on 30 January 1469 inherited the family's wool mill in Vicenza and a warehouse in Venice (App. 4, doct 6),⁹⁶ decided to trade in wool and channel it into Venice.⁹⁷ According to Mauro Lucco, Montagna's involvement in his brother's business is more than a simple conjecture. He has argued that the painter was not present at the sale of twenty-five *campi* in Biron to Alvise Antonio Loschi, made on 31 January 1467

⁹⁵ Mantese (1964b), vol. 3:2, pp. 611-612, 615-616, 621-622. On the production, processing and trade of wool and silk in Vicenza and the Veneto, see Molà (2000), pp. 217-232; Edoardo Demo, 'La produzione serica a Verona e Vicenza tra Quattro e Cinquecento,' in *La seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento. Dal baco al drappo*, eds Luca Molà, Reinhold C. Müller and Claudio Zanier (Venice: Marsilio, 2000), pp. 305-333; Id., *L'«anima della città». L'industria tessile a Verona e Vicenza (1400-1550)* (Milan: Unicopli, 2001), especially pp. 39-46, 342; Id., 'Le manifatture tra Medioevo ed età moderna,' in *L'industria vicentina dal Medioevo ad oggi*, eds Giovanni Luigi Fontana (Padua: Cleup, 2005), pp. 21-126.

⁹⁶ ASVi, *Notarile*, *Daniele Ferretto*, b. 4618, anno 1469, fols 23v-24, 31r-32r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102-103; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 106-108.

⁹⁷ On Venice as "one of the privileged destinations for wool manufacturers of the *terraferma* cities," see Edoardo Demo, 'Industry and Production in the Venetian *Terraferma* (15th-18th centuries),' in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, ed. Eric R. Dusteler (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 298.

on his behalf by his brothers Giovanni, Paolo and Francesco Cincani, probably because he was looking after Giovanni's warehouse in Venice (App. 4, doct 5).⁹⁸ Although Lucco's proposal is not substantiated by any document, it is not far-fetched to suppose that the painter might occasionally have supervised his brother's trade if necessary, according to the Venetian system of the *fraterna*.⁹⁹ After all, there are similar cases of collaboration between two members of the same family who relied on the interchangeability of their own roles in order to achieve a successful management of their household business. For instance, in the autumn of 1534 Francesco Vecellio was sent by his brother Titian to Innsbruck to obtain the usufruct of Tyrolean timber from the archduke Ferdinand I. Likewise, in the same period Titian left for his native Pieve di Cadore, where he negotiated the use of a Venetian warehouse in San Francesco della Vigna, which was reserved for the community from Cadore.¹⁰⁰

The growing Vicentine economy brought about the circulation of large amounts of money in and around Vicenza, which enhanced the quality of life in the whole area and the concentration of wealthy landowners in the city rather than small villages.¹⁰¹ Montagna must have had a comfortable lifestyle, as proven not only by his good revenue from artistic commissions and real estate activities, but also by the many loans he could afford to make in his life. His lending power is proven especially by the large amount of money he was occasionally able to provide, such as the 100 gold ducats lent to Pietro Calcia

⁹⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 106. See also Lucco (2014), pp. 26-27.

⁹⁹ On the *fraterna*, see Anna Bellavitis, 'Family and Society,' in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797* (2013), pp. 319-351; Luciano Pezzolo, 'The *via italiana* to Capitalism,' in *The Cambridge History of Capitalism*, eds Larry Neal and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), vol. 1, pp. 276-277.

¹⁰⁰ Giorgio Tagliaferro and Bernard Aikema, *Le botteghe di Tiziano* (Florence: Alinari 24 Ore, 2009), p. 74.

¹⁰¹ Mantese (1964b), vol. 3:2, pp. 650, 664.

on 5 November 1499 discussed earlier.¹⁰² Montagna's purchase of a house in *contrada* San Lorenzo in Vicenza for 200 ducats in 1484 should also be regarded as proof of his financial stability.¹⁰³ Manuela Barausse has recently argued that the painter paid for the house with the 200 ducats received for painting the *San Marco Teleri*, as agreed on 23 February 1483,¹⁰⁴ and the 100 gold ducats that he was to gain by painting the *Trento Altarpiece*, as agreed on 10 March 1484 [Fig. 2; App. 4, docts 15, 18].¹⁰⁵ This contract also mentions that Montagna was expected to paint the altarpiece within a year. However, there are no documents attesting that the artist managed to meet the deadline, nor is there archival evidence of payments to the artist for this work. Since prices recorded in Renaissance contracts pertain to negotiations usually begun well before the agreement was notarised,¹⁰⁶ on committing himself to purchasing the house in *contrada* San Lorenzo, Montagna was probably mindful of the money that he was to earn for the *Trento Altarpiece*. Barausse's proposal is therefore plausible if we accept that artists' investments in real estate could be favoured by artistic commissions which were likely to be a safe source of income. This, for example, has been argued with regards to Michelangelo, whose purchase of three houses in Via Ghibellina in Florence in 1508 was partly made with the around 3200 ducats he expected to receive from pope Julius II for his frescoes

¹⁰² ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501," fols [6-9v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 136.

¹⁰³ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5009, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 43-44 doct 3; Borenius (1912), p. 6; Zorzi (1916), pp. 92, 104-105; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 120-121.

¹⁰⁴ ASVe, *Scuola Grande di San Marco, Atti*, b. 16 bis (1428-1523), fol. 6v (23 February 1483), cited in Paoletti (1894), pp. 11-12; Borenius (1912), p. 215 doct 1; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 119.

¹⁰⁵ ASVi, *Notarile Francesco Sorio*, b. 4985 (10 March 1484), cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 121-122. As regards Barausse's suggestion that Montagna purchased a house in *contrada* San Lorenzo with the money earned by painting the *San Marco Teleri* and the *Trento Altarpiece*, see Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 121.

¹⁰⁶ O'Malley (2004), p. 18: "Instead, they provide a snapshot of it at a particular moment: the moment when negotiation about the value of materials, delivery deadlines, and usually price had been completed."

in the Sistine Chapel.¹⁰⁷ Further reference to Montagna's financial condition is found in his second will dictated on 6 May 1523, when he bequeathed 150 ducats to his nephew Giuseppe.¹⁰⁸ This bequest can be compared to the 200 ducat dowries left by Palma Vecchio to his niece Margarita,¹⁰⁹ by Paris Bordon to his daughter in 1563, and by Veronese to a distant niece.¹¹⁰

Aside from his extensive investments in real estate in the *terraferma* and remarkable earnings from painting,¹¹¹ Montagna's relationship with the Vicentine nobility also played a major role in the shaping of his social standing. The painter exploited both art and landownership in order to strengthen his ties with the most prominent ranks in Vicenza and the Vicentino. The first document which testifies to his connections with the local nobility is dated 31 January 1467, when he sold twenty-five *campi* in Biron to the Vicentine patrician Alvise Antonio Loschi (App. 4, doct 5).¹¹² The latter was the heir of the lawyer Antonio Nicolò Loschi, who did business with Montagna's family on 20 December 1445, when he struck his first deal with the artist's paternal uncle Bettino Cincani (App. 4, doct 2).¹¹³ Giovanni of Schio's *I memorabili*

¹⁰⁷ Hatfield (2002), pp. 65, 168, 228. According to Hatfield, the houses cost Michelangelo 882 florins (p. 65).

¹⁰⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanecchini*, b. 5390, anno 1523, fol. 82, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 49-50; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 171-173 doct 42; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 153-154.

¹⁰⁹ Rylands (1992), p. 23: "Two hundred ducats went to his niece Margarita, for a dowry... Palma's estate emerged with a cash balance of 490 ducats, a sum that shows him to have been well-off, though far from rich. His relative prosperity is proven in earlier documents, such as his purchases in Montagnana and Serina."

¹¹⁰ Garton (2012), p. 778.

¹¹¹ The highest documented payment for a painting by Montagna is 180 ducats, which he received for his altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child Enthroned (Reunited) with Three Musical Angels*, commissioned in 1499 by the archdeacon Graziadio Bonafino and the chamberlain Leonardo of Ancona, both acting on behalf of the bishop of Vicenza, Giovanni Battista Zeno [Fig. 16]: ASVi, *Notarile, Bartolomeo Aviano*, b. 4740, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 35, 47-48 doct 6; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109, 166-167 doct 38; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 134-135; ASVi, *Notarile, Bartolomeo Aviano*, b. 4741, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 110, 167 doct 39; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 139-140.

¹¹² ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 106.

¹¹³ ASVi, *Ufficio del Registro, Atti*, "Libro primo dell'anno 1445," fols 885r-891v, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 101.

vicentini, a nineteenth-century manuscript held in the Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana of Vicenza, reports that Antonio Nicolò Loschi married Elisabetta Proti, daughter of the Vicentine noble Giovanni Pietro Proti.¹¹⁴ The latter was the founder of the Ospedale dei Proti in Vicenza, whose governors entrusted Montagna with the task of frescoing their chapel in the city cathedral in the mid-1490s. Among the governors of the Ospedale in those years were Bartolomeo of Schio and Giovanni Battista Gualdo. The latter, as written in two notarial deeds drafted on 2 March 1495 and on 5 May 1496, referred to the painter as his “compare,” that is, his “pal.”¹¹⁵ Several other documents attest that the relationship between Gualdo and Montagna was long-standing and enduring: the first document was drawn up on 23 April 1478, when Gualdo witnessed the drafting of the contract for the lost altarpiece painted by Montagna for the church of Piovene, near Vicenza;¹¹⁶ the second document is dated 22 May 1490, when the artist witnessed the signing of the agreement which formalised Gualdo’s purchase of some plots of land in Marola, near Vicenza;¹¹⁷ a third document, drawn up on 14 April 1499, mentions that Montagna and Gualdo went together to the Salt Office;¹¹⁸ and the last document was drawn up on 18 August 1509, the day on which Montagna witnessed the redaction of Gualdo’s will (App. 4, docts 10, 31, 47, 58).¹¹⁹ Montagna and his son Benedetto also painted some frescoes and small oil

¹¹⁴ BBVi, MS 3392, fols 98-99; 220-222.

¹¹⁵ IPAB, *Ospedale dei Proti*, b. 32 “Libri partite degli affittuali dell’Ospedale. 1492-1497,” reg. 17, fols 72v, 112r, cited in Clerici (2001), p. 167.

¹¹⁶ ASVi, *Notarile Francesco Sorio*, b. 4985, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 90, 103, 162-163 doct 34; Puppi (1962), pp. 30, 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 113.

¹¹⁷ ASVi, *Notarile, Giovanni Pietro Revese*, b. 4801, vol. “1490-1493,” fols [1]-2, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Puppi (1962), p. 20; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

¹¹⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Antonio Sarasin*, b. 4924, fol. 74v, cited in Zaupa (1998), p. 129; De Zuani (2015), pp. 91, 477.

¹¹⁹ ASVi, *Notarile, Antonio Sarasin*, b. 4967, fols 203r-204r, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 98; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Mantese (1964b), 3:2, pp. 810-811 note 160; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 142.

paintings, now lost, in Gualdo's house in Vicenza.¹²⁰ The other governor of the Ospedale, Bartolomeo of Schio, belonged to a noble family whose other member Gaspare of Schio commissioned a lost polyptych from Montagna and Gianfrancesco Somaio in 1476 for the Chapel of Santi Pietro e Giustina in the cathedral of Vicenza.¹²¹ In light of this, Luca Clerici has observed that Montagna's personal relationships with the noble families of Vicenza were related to his artistic commissions.¹²²

Montagna's presence at the drafting of Vicentine nobles' negotiations of land and testaments is another aspect that deserves attention. A notarial deed, dated 28 August 1474, attests that he witnessed a deal between the Vicentine patrician Brazzoduro Brazzoduri and Gregorio Restello.¹²³ Another proof of Montagna's presence as legal witness at the drawing up of a noble's will is a notarial deed dated 1 April 1480 (App. 4, doct 11).¹²⁴ In this case, the person dictating the will was Chiara Squarzi, widow of Giovanni Andrea Trento, who was the uncle of Giovanni Battista Trento, the commissioner of Montagna's altarpiece for San Bartolomeo [Fig. 2]. It is therefore not far-fetched to assume that Montagna's ties with the Trento family started long before the 1484 commission of the altarpiece, and that the artist's affiliation with the local aristocracy went beyond his activity as a painter. The thin line between his pictorial activity and non-pictorial business is borne out by two deeds drafted

¹²⁰ BMVe, Girolamo Gualdo, 1650. *Giardino di Chà Gualdo*, MS it. IV 127 = 5102, fols 26-96; BMVe, idem, 1643. *Raccolta delle Inscritzioni*, MS it. IV 133 = 5103, fols 5-7, fol. 26; BMVe, Paolo Gualdo, *Memorie, lettere, discorsi: di lui o da lui raccolte*, Cod. it. VI 146 = 5979, fol. 65 r, nn. 10-11. For a detailed description of the lost frescoes by Bartolomeo and Benedetto Montagna in Giovan Battista Gualdo's house in Vicenza, see Morsolin (1894), pp. 187, 213-215. See also Girolamo jr. Gualdo, *Il giardino di Chà Gualdo*, ed. Lionello Puppi (Florence: Olschki, 1972), pp. 29-30; De Zuani (2015), pp. 164-165, 450, 461.

¹²¹ Clerici (2001), pp. 167-168. ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Malo*, b. 4643, cited in Mantese (1964a), pp. 248-249 doct 1; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 109-110.

¹²² Clerici (2001), pp. 167-168.

¹²³ ASVi, *Notarile, Antonio Sarasin*, b. 4970, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 89 note 6; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Lucco (2014), p. 108.

¹²⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Giovanni Antonio Gallo*, b. 5043, fol. 33v, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 45 doct 1; Borenius (1909), p. 4 note 5; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 114.

on 26 September 1499 and 15 February 1503 (App. 4, docts 49, 51). The first document pertains to the agreement between Montagna and Bartolomeo Squarzi, who agreed to hand over four plots of land with houses in Longare and Secula to the painter as final payment for his family altarpiece [Fig. 5].¹²⁵ The second document attests that Montagna's purchase of some plots of land with houses in Longare and Secula from the Vicentine citizen Alberto Godi was notarised in the presence of the legal witness Bartolomeo Squarzi.¹²⁶ Not by accident, in this document we read of the painter's decision to invest money in lands situated in the same localities where, four years before, he received some lands from Bartolomeo Squarzi himself. This decision was not so unusual at the time, as we know that in 1523 Pordenone acquired some plots of land in Tiezzo, in the Friuli, where in 1515 he received land from the artisan Giovanni Francesco Cargnelutto in part payment for his altarpiece of the *Madonna della Misericordia with Sts Christopher and Joseph* in the Pordenone Duomo.¹²⁷ Similarly, a contract dated 26 June 1536 attests that the painter Paris Bordon was to be rewarded with a plot of land in Lovadina, near Treviso, as downpayment for the altarpiece of *St Martin and the Poor* and some frescoes painted in the church of that village.¹²⁸ The plot abutted on the house which

¹²⁵ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501," fols [3v-5v], cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 35, 49 doct 7; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109-110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 135-136.

¹²⁶ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501," fol. [5v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 136-137.

¹²⁷ Cohen (1996), pp. 87-88.

¹²⁸ AST, *Archivio Notarile*, b. 484, Atti Giovanni Girolamo Toscan, Protocollo 6 maggio – 8 agosto 1536, fols 108r-110r, cited in BCT, MS 1410, Gustavo Bampo, *I pittori fioriti a Treviso e nel territorio. Documenti inediti dal secolo XIII al XVII tratti dall'archivio notarile di Treviso*, late nineteenth century, ad vocem Giovanni Girolamo Toscan, pp. 8-9; Giuseppe Liberali, 'Lotto, Pordenone e Tiziano a Treviso: cronologie, interpretazioni ed ambientamenti inediti,' *Memorie dell'istituto veneto di scienze lettere e arti* 33:3 (1963), pp. 12-13, 117-118 doct 43; Mariani Canova (1964), p. 70; Fossaluzza (1984), pp. 128-129.

the artist owned in Lovadina, where the lands that he had inherited from his mother Angelica were located.¹²⁹

Last but not least, on 29 November 1503, Montagna witnessed the signing of a contract between Lucia Trissino, wife of the noble Sebastiano Thiene, and Giovanni Magrè, who came to a number of agreements with Bartolomeo Montagna in 1486. In that year, as proven by a note in a notarial deed drawn up on 11 and 12 December, “Pacta inter dominum magistrum Bartholomeum Montagna pictorem et Iohannem de Magrade”¹³⁰ were agreed (App. 4, doct 22). These agreements, probably concerning a painting, have been associated by Lionello Puppi with the commission of Montagna’s altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child with Sts Anthony of Padua and John the Evangelist*, painted between 1503 and 1505 for the Magrè altar in the church of San Lorenzo in Vicenza, and now in the church of San Giovanni Battista in San Giovanni Ilarione, near Verona [Fig. 21].¹³¹

In conclusion, in this section I have provided a snapshot of the making of Montagna’s social standing and financial stability by assessing them not only in light of his artistic career, but also of his real estate activities. I have emphasised the importance of considering the painter from a wider perspective, one that encompasses the historical and economic context in which he carried out his business, his family ties, and relationship with various social strata and the Vicentino. These factors have therefore been examined in

¹²⁹ AST, *Archivio Notarile*, b. 388, Atti di Francesco Biadene, Protocollo 4 gennaio 1523 - 3 dicembre 1524, fols 131r-132v, cited in Bailo and Biscaro (1900), pp. 18, 19, 86 doct 5; BCT, MS 1410, fol. 1; Mariani Canova (1964), p. 69; Fossaluzza (1984), p. 125.

¹³⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 93; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 124.

¹³¹ Puppi (1962), p. 125. The chronology of this painting, which is now displayed in the church of San Giovanni Battista at San Giovanni Ilarione, near Verona, is a moot point. If Puppi has proposed a 1487 date, Lucco (2014, pp. 351-353) has recently dated the altarpiece to the years 1503-1505.

connection with the socioeconomic *milieu* in which Montagna seems to have comfortably combined painting and landownership.

3.3 Montagna's Investment Trends

In this section, I aim to reconstruct Montagna's investment trends by analysing his approximate earnings from public artistic commissions¹³² and revenue in cash and kind from real estate activities. The assessment of Montagna's income from both painting and real estate transactions is instrumental in throwing some light on his financial situation.¹³³

Montagna's earnings derived not only from public artistic commissions, but also from making small private devotional paintings of the Virgin and Child. However, the estimation of the revenue from pious images for domestic devotion and assessment of its impact on Montagna's income are extremely difficult tasks, as neither primary nor secondary sources mention the prices or production costs of these works. This lack of data thus prevents me from providing an exhaustive overview of the artist's overall gains from painting. Lorenzo Lotto's *Libro di spese diverse*, nonetheless, is an essential tool for understanding the earnings that artists could gain, or expected to gain, by making this type of devotional imagery. Some of the annotations of this account book, dated between 1541 and 1547, provide useful insights into Lotto's tendency to estimate the monetary value of his devotional paintings. His valuations, which in some cases appear to stem from his eagerness to propose what he believes to be the just price,¹³⁴ range between 4 and around 25 ducats. The former was both the estimated value and selling price of a small

¹³² The paintings discussed in this section concern Montagna's public commissions only, that is to say the production of altarpieces and frescoes for churches, alongside the *telari* for the Scuola Grande di San Marco in Venice and the portraits of Paduan bishops in the Palazzo Vescovile in Padua [Fig. 23].

¹³³ On the advantages and disadvantages of this approach, see Michelle O'Malley, 'Commissioning Bodies, Allocation Decisions and Price Structures for Altarpieces in Fifteenth- and Early Sixteenth-Century Italy,' in *The Art Market in Italy (15th-17th Centuries)* (2003), p. 166.

¹³⁴ For instance, in May 1544 Lotto recorded in his account book that a painting showing the Virgin, made for the Dominican preacher Fra Lorenzo of Bergamo, "was honestly worth 12 ducats", see Lotto (1969), p. 96.

devotional picture of *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist and St Zechariah*, now in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli of Milan, as recorded by Lotto between 1 February and 19 April 1546 [Fig. 239]. This picture, initially painted for Fra Lorenzo da Pesaro, syndic of San Pietro Martire in Murano, was eventually given by the artist to the Venetian gilder Giovan Maria da Legnago, after being rejected by a nun on behalf of Fra Lorenzo.¹³⁵ The price proposed by Lotto for his *Virgin and Child with Two Cherubs and Sts Jacopo and Laurence*, as he recorded on 20 July 1547, was “at least” 25 ducats. This painting was made for Lorenzo Giustiniani and Jacopo Pisani, two officers of the Venetian *Zecca*, who hung it in their room.¹³⁶ Yet Lotto’s expectations were not always met, as in the case of two paintings of the *Virgin and Sleeping Child* made for the aforementioned Venetian gilder Giovan Maria da Legnago, who paid 11 ducats for both works, although the asking price was 6 ducats for each painting.¹³⁷ This commission shows that the painter, despite his valuation criteria being grounded in expertise, did not always succeed in earning what he deemed the just price.

The calculation of Montagna’s overall gains is hindered also by the loss of the account books and payment receipts that he probably kept for his records. Furthermore, archival documents provide only a fragmentary picture of Montagna’s real estate activities since, in most cases, we do not know whether the artist regained the money lent, and whether rentees redeemed the property beforehand or paid the annual interest until the end of the contract. Nor can we be certain that Montagna stood to collect the annual interest,

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 102, 341-342, 353.

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp. 32, 343, especially 343: “un quadro raffigurante la Madonna col Bambino e i ss. Jacopo e Lorenzo, ordinato da Lorenzo Giustiniani e Jacopo Pisani, provveditori della Zecca di Venezia, da appendere nella loro camera.”

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 96, 104-105.

which makes it impossible to verify if and to what extent he capitalised on purchase and leaseback loans. In light of this, Montagna's income in cash and kind from real estate transactions may have been higher than the earnings that I have been able to compute. Some notarial deeds, however, attest that he regained the money lent after a set period of time, which might suggest that he charged an interest in cash or kind on an annual basis, as originally agreed, until the rentee settled the debt with him. The same cannot be suggested with regards to Montagna's interest-bearing loans described in documents which mention only the amount of cash or kind that the artist was to charge as interest, and sometimes the number of years for which this interest was to be paid. For instance, in a notarial deed drafted on 16 September 1482, we read that Montagna leased a *campo* in Brendola to Giacomo and Paganino of Brendola for 3 *lire di piccoli* per year for ten years (App. 4, doct 14). The deed also mentions that the rentees were expected to pay the land rent at Christmas, and that they could redeem the *campo* by paying 50 *lire di piccoli*, which is the price for which they had sold their field to Montagna. Yet we do not know of a second deed proving that after ten years, as agreed in 1482, Giacomo and Paganino settled their debt with Montagna by buying back the field. Another obstacle to the interpretation of such documents is that rentees did not always return the loan after the period of time agreed in the initial contract, as demonstrated by Montagna's purchase and leaseback loan to Marzolino, son of the late Gregorio of Costafabbrica. Marzolino, as agreed on 10 April 1484 (App. 4, doct 20), had a right to redeem the *campo* sold in Costafabbrica to the painter within four years, but he did so after only one year, as evidenced by another deed.¹³⁸ It is therefore extremely complicated to assess the impact that

¹³⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5009, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 105; Barausse in Lucco

these undocumented transactions had on Montagna's financial situation. There are nine real estate negotiations, carried out by Montagna in the 1480s and 1490s, for which we do not have any document attesting that he regained his money.¹³⁹ The only negotiation attesting that the artist regained part of the money lent is the *livello* agreed with Vincenzo, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto, who, on 31 August 1519, had to hand over his rights to some plots of land in San Felice in order to settle his debt of 162 *lire di piccoli* (App. 4, doct 68).¹⁴⁰ Vincenzo incurred this debt as he had not been able to pay Montagna the annual rental fee of 15 *lire di piccoli* on a *campo* in Biron and three *campi* in Borgo San Felice, as agreed on 10 May 1491 (App. 4, doct 36).¹⁴¹ A few weeks before settling his debt with Montagna, on 5 August 1519, Vincenzo also reimbursed the painter by handing over two plots of land in Borgo San Felice to him (App. 4, doct 67).¹⁴² This reimbursement was due to the opposition of Alvise Antonio Loschi's heirs, who had prevented Montagna from obtaining the plot of land in Biron purchased from Vincenzo on 10 May 1491.

In light of this, I shall discuss only Montagna's purchase and leaseback loans for which we have archival documents that evidence both their beginning and end, along with the interest charged. Nevertheless, archival documents on Montagna's real estate negotiations pose yet another problem of interpretation. In a deed drawn up on 19 May 1496, for example, we read that Montagna sold a *campo* in Camisano, near Vicenza, for 100 *lire* to Bartolomeo Vicentini, who

(2014), pp. 122-123.

¹³⁹ These negotiations were drafted on 16 September 1482, 1 September 1483, 25 November 1488, 8 December 1488, 12 May 1489, 24 January 1491, 10 May 1491, 19 May 1496, and 5 November 1499.

¹⁴⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 86, 112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 149-150.

¹⁴¹ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, b. 5502, fols 79v-82r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 130.

¹⁴² ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075 (see also ASVi, *Antiche magistrature giudiziarie, Banco del Sigillo*, b. 5), cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 86, 112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 149.

had been paying Montagna a rent of 6 *staia* of wheat per year (App. 4, doct 44).¹⁴³ If this suggests that Montagna had originally made a purchase and leaseback loan to Vicentini, who had to pay an annual interest in return, we do not have any document that attests to when the contract began or for how long the borrower/rentee paid the interest to the artist. Bartolomeo Vicentini was only one of the many rentees who paid Montagna an annual interest in kind, as the painter charged interest in harvest yields, which usually ranged from 3 to 19.5 *staia* of wheat per year, regularly during his life. It must be specified that a *staio* had different values in Montagna's day, as proven by the payments to the architect Lorenzo da Bologna recorded in the account book of the Ospedale dei Proti in Vicenza. The value of a *staio* of wheat appears to have been rather stable in 1479, as in May it was worth only 14 *soldi*, which is almost one-seventh of a Vicentine ducat, whose value was 4 *lire* and 13 *soldi* (= 93 *soldi*), whereas in October it was valued at 13 *soldi*.¹⁴⁴ In the following decade, the monetary value of a *staio* of wheat rose from 15 *soldi* in May 1486 to 23 *soldi* in April-May 1487, before dropping to 20 *soldi* in May 1488.¹⁴⁵ We also know that, as partial payment for the *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece* painted around 1520 [Fig. 25], Montagna was granted the crop income of 7 *staia* of wheat, which was valued at 30 ducats, from two *campi* in Cologna Veneta.¹⁴⁶ In light of this, the value of a *staio* of wheat in the early 1520s in Cologna Veneta was around 4.3 ducats (399.9 *soldi*). In light of the continuous variation of the worth of the

¹⁴³ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5108, fols 156v-157r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 132.

¹⁴⁴ IPAB, *Ospedale dei Proti*, b. 31 "Libri partite degli affittuali dell'Ospedale. 1479-1480," n. 9, fols 47v, 53v, cited in Clerici (2001), p. 132 doct 3. Clerici has underlined the higher monetary value of a Venetian gold ducat, which had been 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi* since 1455 (p. 157 note 99). On the value of a Vicentine ducat in Montagna's day, see Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 99.

¹⁴⁵ IPAB, *Ospedale dei Proti*, b. 32 "Libri partite degli affittuali dell'Ospedale. 1486-1488," n. 13, fol. 52r, cited in Clerici (2001), pp. 151-153 doct 4.

¹⁴⁶ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fols 140v-141v, cited in Borenius (1909), pp. 217-218; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 167-168 doct 40; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 152-153.

staio, even in the space of a month, it is not possible to calculate the monetary value of the interest in *staia* of wheat charged by Montagna.

Montagna's business stretches over a fifty-four year time span, from 31 January 1467, when his brothers Giovanni, Paolo and Francesco Cincani sold twenty-five *campi* in Biron on his behalf for around 907 *lire* and 12 *soldi*,¹⁴⁷ to 4 November 1521, when he received 80 ducats as payment for the *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece* [App. 4, docts 5, 71].¹⁴⁸ His revenue from real estate transactions in the 1480s was around 549 *lire* (c. 119.3 ducats), of which 53 *lire* were received between 1484 and 1485 from Marzolino, son of the late Gregorio of Costafabbrica. Marzolino paid Montagna an interest of 3 *lire* for one year until 1485, when he settled his debt by returning the 50 *lire* borrowed from the painter on 10 April 1484 (App. 4, doct 20).¹⁴⁹ The remaining 496 *lire* of Montagna's income from real estate activities in the 1480s are the sum he earned on 7 October 1488 by selling some plots of land in Orzinuovi to the friar Antonio Orsini (App. 4, doct 24). Orsini paid the overall price of the plots, which was 919 *lire* and 1 *soldo di pianeti bresciani*, half in cash (474 *lire*) and half by granting Montagna the credit of 445 *lire* that he had lent to Giorgio Corniani. Since Corniani could not settle his debt with Montagna until 14 January 1495, he had to pawn a plot of circa nine *campi* in Orzinuovi, whose value was 445 *lire*, which the artist rented out to him for 22 *lire* per year for six years (App. 4, docts 43, 46).¹⁵⁰ Thus, Montagna earned from this negotiation 474 *lire* in cash on 7 October 1488, plus the one-year land rent of 22 *lire* paid by

¹⁴⁷ ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 106.

¹⁴⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fols 140v-141v, cited in Borenus (1909), pp. 217-218; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 167-168 doct 40; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 152-153.

¹⁴⁹ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5009, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 105; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 122-123.

¹⁵⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 94-95, 105-106; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 125-126.

Corniani until the end of 1489. In addition to this, in the 1480s Montagna may have gained 25.5 *staia* of wheat (between 510 and 586.5 kg), as suggested by two documents drafted on 9 and 16 December 1488 (App. 4, docts 27-28).¹⁵¹ As regards Montagna's expenditures in the 1480s, he spent circa 338 ducats on real estate, of which 150 ducats were spent on his house in *contrada* San Lorenzo and 875 *lire* and 10 *soldi di piccoli* (188 ducats) invested in land in the Vicentino (App. 2). During this decade, the artist also gained around 330 ducats from artistic commissions. This sum includes 30 ducats for the lost polyptych commissioned in 1476 by the canon Gaspare of Schio for his chapel in the cathedral of Vicenza,¹⁵² 200 ducats for the *San Marco Teleri*, and 100 gold ducats for the *Trento Altarpiece* [Fig. 2].¹⁵³

Unfortunately, we do not know Montagna's revenue from two artistic commissions dating from the 1480s. The first commission is his collaboration in 1484 with the woodcarver Pietro Antonio da Lendinara, who inlaid the twenty-four backrests of the choir stalls in the Vicentine church of Santa Maria di Monte Berico. In the contract, it is clear that Montagna was to provide some of the preparatory drawings for the backrests, although we do not know which percentage he gained of the 4.5 gold ducats received by Pietro Antonio for each backrest.¹⁵⁴ The second commission concerns Montagna's lost frescoes in

¹⁵¹ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 106-107, 114; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 126; ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5083, fols 122v-123r, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Zorzi (1916), pp. 94, 107; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 126-127.

¹⁵² Montagna received these 30 ducats in two instalments, between 1482 and 1483, from Giacoma, Giovanni Violini of Campedello's widow, as agreed with the painter on 28 February 1481. See ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, reg. "Prothocollus mei Francisci de Scollaribus. 1478-1482", cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 90, 103, 164-165 doct 35; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 115-116.

¹⁵³ ASVe, *Scuola Grande di San Marco, Atti*, b. 16 bis (1428-1523), fol. 6v (23 February 1483), cited in Paoletti (1894), pp. 11-12; Borenus (1912), p. 215 doct 1; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 119; ASVi, *Notarile Francesco Sorio*, b. 4985 (10 March 1484), cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 121-122.

¹⁵⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5117, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 92, 105, 165-166 doct 37; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Aristide Dani, 'Tarsie lignee di Pier Antonio dell'Abate da Modena per la chiesa di S. Maria di Monte Berico,' in *Maestri e opere d'arte del Quattrocento a Monte Berico*

the Palazzo Comunale of Bassano, made in 1487. According to the account book of the Council of Bassano, the painter was paid only 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi*,¹⁵⁵ although this was presumably one of the payments he received for the frescoes.

In the 1490s, the painter's earnings in cash from real estate activities increased by circa 110.5% (to around 1155.5 *lire*/c. 251.1 ducats). This sum includes 600.5 *lire* from sales of land,¹⁵⁶ 445 *lire bresciane* paid by Giorgio Corniani on 14 January 1495 to settle his debt with the artist, and a five-year land rent of 110 *lire* paid by Corniani until he settled the debt.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, Montagna's rental income in kind grew by around 23.6% (to circa 31.5 *staia* of wheat, that is between 630 and 724.5 kg). The 31.5 *staia* of wheat are the payments in crops gained by the artist as agreed on 9 December 1488 (3 *staia* of wheat per year for five years, until 13 February 1494),¹⁵⁸ and on 16 December 1488 (19.5 *staia* of wheat per year for two years, until 10 January 1491).¹⁵⁹ Montagna's purchases of real estate in the 1490s dwindled by around

(Vicenza: Tip. Pontificia Vescovile S. Giuseppe, 1965), p. 19; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 123-124.

¹⁵⁵ ACB, *Comune di Bassano, Libri di cassa*, reg. 7.15, p. 145, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 44 doct 4; Borenius (1912), p. 8 note 2; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 124.

¹⁵⁶ These sales of land were notarised on 10 January 1491, 13 February 1494, and 17 June 1494. See ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5300, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128; ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 106-107, 114; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 130-131; ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 4988, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 96, 108-109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 131.

¹⁵⁷ The document, as noted by Manuela Barausse, was drawn up on 14 January 1495 by the notary Giovanni Antonio de Milis in Orzinuovi, and is now in the Archivio di Stato of Brescia. However, Montagna sold the nine *campi* in Orzinuovi back to Giorgio Corniani on 13 November 1497. On this, see ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "Francesco Scolari. 1497-1498", fols [1-2], cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 133-134.

¹⁵⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 106-107, 114; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 126; ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 106-107, 114; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 130-131.

¹⁵⁹ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5083, fols 122v-123r, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Zorzi (1916), pp. 94, 107; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 126-127; ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5300, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

10.5% (to somewhere in the region of 303 ducats¹⁶⁰). This sum includes 50 ducats paid by the artist on 18 March 1490 as final payment for his house in *contrada* San Lorenzo, around 6 ducats spent on a part of another house in Vicenza on 24 January 1491, and 425 *lire di piccoli* plus 156 ducats (around 725 *lire*/247 ducats in total) spent on land in the *terraferma* (App. 4, docts 30, 34, 36, 38, 41, 50). In the 1490s, Montagna's earnings from painting rose by 5%, to circa 346 ducats, of which 326 *lire* (around 70 ducats) for the *Certosa di Pavia Altarpiece* [Fig. 14], 40 ducats (plus wine and wheat) for the frescoes in the Proti Chapel in the cathedral of Vicenza [Fig. 15], around 160 *lire* and 18 ducats (around 121 ducats, of which 69 ducats in land) for the *Squarzi Altarpiece* [Fig. 5], and 115 ducats (plus 65 ducats received between 1503 and 1504) for the altarpiece commissioned in 1499 by the bishop Giovanni Battista Zeno for the main altar of the cathedral of Vicenza [Fig. 16].¹⁶¹

In the sixteenth century, only two notarial deeds which mention Montagna's purchases of real estate are known (App. 4, docts 51, 69). The first deed was drafted on 15 February 1503,¹⁶² when he purchased some plots of land with outbuildings in Longare and Secula, near Vicenza, from the Vicentine citizen Alberto Godi, although there is no reference to the selling price. The second document, dated 25 February 1521, attests that the artist

¹⁶⁰ This sum does not include the 100 *lire di piccoli* which, on 24 March 1491, Montagna agreed to spend on two *campi* in Biron, since he renounced this purchase on 10 May 1491. See ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, b. 5470, fol. 29, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 129; ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, b. 5502, fols 79v-82r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 130.

¹⁶¹ BBM, AD XV 12, 20/26, cited in Borenus (1912), p. 40 note 1; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128; IPAB, *Ospedale dei Proti*, b. 32 "Libri partite degli affittuali dell'Ospedale. 1492-1497," reg. 17, fols 117v-118r, cited in Clerici (2001), pp. 162-163 doct 7; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 131-132; ASVi, *Notarile, Bartolomeo Aviano*, b. 4740, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 35, 47-48 doct 6; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109, 166-167 doct 38; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 134-135. According to Lucco (2014, p. 343), the central part of the painting commissioned by cardinal Zeno might be *The Virgin and Child Enthroned (Reunited) with Three Musical Angels* now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Lyon [Fig. 16].

¹⁶² ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501", fol. [5v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 136-137.

spent as little as 2 ducats on a *campo* in Monteviale, near Vicenza.¹⁶³ Very little is therefore known of Montagna's investments in real estate, which might be due partly to the loss of archival documents, and partly to archival research being mainly focused on late fifteenth-century documents because the painter's land-buying spree took place in the 1480s and 1490s. The artist's dearth of investments in the Cinquecento is less surprising when bearing in mind that in the 1480s and 1490s Montagna spent a remarkable amount of money on a large number of plots of land scattered across the Vicentino and beyond. It should also be taken into account that, between 1508 and 1516, the *terraferma* was ravaged by the war of the League of Cambrai, whose devastating effects severely affected the quality of life of cities such as Vicenza and Padua, where Montagna worked at the time.¹⁶⁴ The war certainly took its toll on crops and potentially wreaked havoc on the painter's business. The plight caused by the war may also account for the scarcity of known rental payments in kind received by Montagna between 1498 and 1523, as proven by only three documents (App. 4, docts 56, 69, 71). In the first, drawn up on 20 May 1508, we read that he rented out some plots of land in Monteviale to Francesco, son of the late Iorio of Monteviale, for 9.5 *staia* of wheat per year for ten years.¹⁶⁵ Yet, since there are no further documents which provide evidence of the development and outcome of the agreement, it can only be argued that this might have been a highly profitable negotiation for Montagna, as he might have gained 95 *staia* of wheat, that is between 1900 and 2185 kg of wheat in ten years. He might also have been paid in farm produce by Nicolò Pina, son of

¹⁶³ ASVi, *Notarile*, Domenico Cisotti, b. 5565, fol. 450, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 150.

¹⁶⁴ Mantese (1964b), vol. 3:2, p. 635.

¹⁶⁵ ASVi, *Notarile*, Francesco Scolari, b. 177, fasc. "1508," fols [1-2], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 98, 110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 141.

the late Leonardo di Monteviale, as agreed on 25 February 1521, when the artist leased a *campo* in Monteviale for half a *staio* of wheat per year, although there is no mention of the length of the contract in the document.¹⁶⁶ The last known deed, drafted on 4 November 1521, mentions that Montagna received the crop income of 7 *staia* of wheat per year from two *campi* in Cologna Veneta from Lucia, Francesco Facini's widow, albeit, once again, the deed does not specify the length of the tenancy.¹⁶⁷ As regards the artist's revenue in cash from real estate, he might have earned 3 gold ducats between 1517 and 1518 by leasing a fireplace and a washbasin in his house, plus 5 ducats between 1518 and 1519 by renting out a workshop with fireplace also located in his dwelling.¹⁶⁸ The painter's decision to lease his dwelling's facilities shows that, even late in his life, he did not lose his business acumen and that he did not capitalise on land only.¹⁶⁹ As a matter of fact, artists engaged in revenue-bearing, non-artistic activities long before Montagna and Lorenzo Lotto's day. For instance, Giotto, who has been defined as a "capitalist"¹⁷⁰ and "the artist-businessman"¹⁷¹ who engaged in money-lending activities,¹⁷² rented out a loom

¹⁶⁶ ASVi, *Notarile, Domenico Cisotti*, b. 5565, fol. 450, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 150. The monetary value of a *staio* of wheat in 1521, which corresponded to about 4.3 Vicentine ducats, can be calculated according to the data provided in the contract for the *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece*, which is dated 4 November of the same year [Fig. 25]. However, Cologna Veneta was located in the area of Verona, where the worth of harvest yields, such as wheat and wine, might not have been the same. On the contract of the *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece*, see ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fols 140v-141v, cited in Borenus (1909), pp. 217-218; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 167-168 doct 40; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 152-153.

¹⁶⁷ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fols 140v-141v, cited in Borenus (1909), pp. 217-218; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 167-168 doct 40; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 152-153.

¹⁶⁸ ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 111; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 147; ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 111; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 148.

¹⁶⁹ Similarly, later in the sixteenth century, Lotto sublet, on more than one occasion, a part of the house he was renting, as happened in 1548, when he hosted Ieronimo Pilino in Venice. On this, see Muraro (1984), p. 156.

¹⁷⁰ Will Durant, *The Renaissance: A History of Civilization in Italy from 1304-1576 A.D.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 24.

¹⁷¹ John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy: 1250-1400* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 219.

to a poor weaver at an interest of 120%,¹⁷³ as attested by a document drafted on 4 September 1312.¹⁷⁴

The aforementioned rents are the only documented rents from which Montagna received fixed cash payments in the last twenty-four years of his life, when painting was his main source of income, while rental income supplemented his earnings from artistic commissions. There is also little evidence of Montagna's revenue from selling land in the sixteenth century. In the only known notarial deed, dated 25 February 1519, we read that Antonio Cincani sold some plots of land in Orzinuovi on behalf of his uncle Montagna, albeit there is no mention of the selling price (App. 4, doct 66). In light of this, Montagna's revenue from real estate activities in the sixteenth century seems to have decreased considerably in comparison to the capitals that he earned in the previous decades.

A more accurate calculation can be made of Montagna's sixteenth-century earnings from painting, which were approximately 465 ducats¹⁷⁵ in the 1500s, 61 ducats¹⁷⁶ in the 1510s, and 80 ducats (of which 30 ducats in kind)¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Camesasca (1969), p. 200; Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, 'Giotto Past and Present: An Introduction,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, eds Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 5.

¹⁷³ Miriam Beard, *A History of the Business Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 141; White (1966), p. 203; Camesasca (1969), p. 206 note 12; Peter Burke, 'L'artista come imprenditore,' in *Storia dell'arte italiana* (1979), vol. 2:1, p. 98; Derbes and Sandona (2004), p. 5.

¹⁷⁴ ASF, *Notarile Antecosimiano*, b. 11484, fol. 88v, cited in Michael Viktor Schwarz and Pia Theis, *Giottus pictor* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), p. 104.

¹⁷⁵ This sum includes 65 ducats that Montagna received, between 1503 and 1504, as final payment for the altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child with Saints*, commissioned in 1499 for the cathedral of Vicenza by the archdeacon Graziadio Bonafino and the chamberlain Leonardo of Ancona, both acting on behalf of the bishop of Vicenza Giovanni Battista Zeno, 150 ducats received for frescoing the San Biagio Chapel in the church of Santi Nazaro e Celso in Verona between 1504 and 1506, and 250 ducats earned for painting the portraits of Paduan bishops in the Palazzo Vescovile in Padua in 1506 [Figs 16, 22-23].

¹⁷⁶ This sum includes 20 ducats earned by Montagna in 1512 for painting *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone* in the Scuola del Santo in Padua [Fig. 24], 40 ducats and 19 *grossi* granted to the painter on 16 June 1514 for painting the altarpiece of *St Mary Magdalen with Sts Jerome, Paula (?), Monica and Augustine*, commissioned in 1507 by Piera Porto for the church of Santa Corona in Vicenza [Fig. 6], and 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi* earned on 6 July 1517 by the artist for painting in the Palazzo del Podestà of Vicenza. On Montagna's *St Mary Magdalen with Sts Jerome*,

between 1520 and 1523, when the painter died. However, we do not know the painter's overall income from painting in the Palazzo del Podestà of Vicenza, as a document dated 24 November 1517 mentions that Montagna received 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi* on 6 July 1517, while his son Benedetto was paid 6 *lire* on 2 July 1517 and other 6 *lire* on 10 July 1517 (App. 4, doct 64).¹⁷⁸ These low fees suggest that they were earned by the two painters in part payment for their works. In comparison to the 1490s, his known revenue from painting increased in the 1500s by around 34,5%, while dropping drastically by around 87% in the 1510s. One possible reason for such a remarkable decrease might be the financial crisis during and after the war of the League of Cambrai (1508-1516). Another decisive factor might have been Montagna's waning reputation as a painter, which is suggested by the lower fees paid for both his frescoes and altarpieces made in the last thirteen years of his life. In particular, Montagna received only 20 ducats for the fresco of *The Miracle or Recognition of the Jambone*, made in 1512 [Fig. 24]. Despite its large dimensions, 287 x 441 centimetres, and numerous figures depicted, this fresco cost the Scuola del Santo 20 ducats only. The latter is less than half of the price of 40 ducats plus in-kind payments spent on his fresco of the four evangelists and *The Adoration of the Child with Sts James, Anthony the Abbot and the Donor Giampietro Proti*, made in 1495-1496 for the Proti Chapel in the cathedral of Vicenza [Fig. 15]. Since the higher price of these frescoes does not account for the lower number of figures than those depicted in Montagna's fresco for the Scuola del Santo, it might be that in 1512 the painter did not have the same appeal as in the 1490s. This is also suggested

Paula (?), *Monica and Augustine*, see Mantese (1968-1969), pp. 224-258; Bucci (1991), pp. 5-26; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 142-143.

¹⁷⁷ Montagna earned this sum for painting the *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece* around 1520 for the Scuola di San Giuseppe [Fig. 25].

¹⁷⁸ BBVi, *Archivio del Comune di Vicenza, Libri delle provvisioni*, vol. 795, fol. 106, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 148.

by the only 40 ducats and 19 *grossi* spent on the *Santa Corona Altarpiece* for Piera Porto, which was commissioned on 9 October 1509 and still being painted on 16 June 1514 [Fig. 6; App. 4, docts 59, 62].¹⁷⁹ The altarpiece measures 418 x 267 centimetres and shows five figures. The altarpiece for the Certosa di Pavia, on the other hand, cost 326 *lire* (around 70 ducats), depicts seven figures and measures 247 x 175 centimetres [Fig. 14]. The price of the painting was therefore almost twice as much as the *Santa Corona Altarpiece* despite being considerably smaller and including only two more figures.

In conclusion, the figures provided in this section help deepen our knowledge of Montagna's financial assets and income fluctuations which have emerged from my analysis of his revenue from painting and real estate activities.

¹⁷⁹ ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5306, cited in Mantese (1968-1969), pp. 252-255 doct 4; Bucci (1991), p. 24 note 33; ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5307, cited in Mantese (1968-1969), pp. 255-257 doct 4; Bucci (1991), p. 24 note 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 146-147.

Bartolomeo Montagna's Income from Painting and Real Estate

Activities

Nota bene: All figures have been calculated approximately and according to the currency exchange rate (1 Vicentine ducat = 4 *lire* 13 *soldi*; 1 *lira* = 20 *soldi*) provided by Manuela Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 99. Earnings from painting are shown in red, income in cash from real estate activities in blue, and in-kind revenue from real estate activities in green (1 *staio* of wheat = 20 to 23 kg).

1480s	1490s	1500s	1510s	1521-1523
<p>330 ducats; 549 <i>lire</i> (119.3 ducats); 25.5 <i>staia</i> of wheat (between 510 and 586.5 kg)</p>	<p>346 ducats; 1155.5 <i>lire</i> (251.1 ducats); 31.5 <i>staia</i> of wheat (between 630 and 724.5 kg)</p>	<p>465 ducats; 95 <i>staia</i> of wheat (between 1900 and 2185 kg)*</p>	<p>61 ducats; 8 ducats (36.8 <i>lire</i>); some plots of land in San Felice (worth 162 <i>lire</i> <i>di</i> <i>piccoli</i>)</p>	<p>50 ducats; 2 ducats (9.2 <i>lire</i>); 7 <i>staia</i> of wheat</p>

* This is Montagna's potential in-kind revenue from a rental agreement reached with Francesco da Monteviale and notarised on 20 May 1508 (App. 4, doct 56).

3.4 Montagna's Money-Lending

This section explores the strategies and benefits of Montagna's land investments, most of which were made in the last two decades of the Quattrocento. Through a careful scrutiny of published archival documents, I shall shed light particularly on Montagna's business acumen in his numerous purchase and leaseback loans, that is interest-bearing loans disguised as a lease of real estate. In other words, the borrower sold real estate to the artist, who, by means of a rental agreement called *livello*, promptly leased it back to the same borrower in exchange for a land rent in cash or kind. The borrower usually had the right to redeem the land after a set period of time, which ranged from one to ten years and could be deferred by the lender,¹⁸⁰ by returning the money initially borrowed. The length of Montagna's loans ranged between two and ten years.¹⁸¹

The Franciscan preacher Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444) mentioned three categories of items which, according to the Franciscan theologian Alexander of Hales (b. 1185 circa – d. 1245), could be lent at interest: metal, such as gold or silver; crops, such as wine or wheat; and money. These categories show that the value of the lent item was calculated according to weight, measure and number. Bernardino also argued that only the negotiation of the aforementioned items could be regarded as usurious lending.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Grubb (1996), p. 122.

¹⁸¹ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501," fols [6-9v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 136. The document mentions that Pietro Calcia had the right to redeem the ten *campi* in Cittadella that Montagna had rented out to him within two years; ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5097, anno 1482, fols 88-89, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 91, 103-104, 122; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 118. The document attests that Giacomo and Paganino of Brendola could have redeemed the *campo* in Brendola that Montagna had rented out to them after ten years.

¹⁸² Alberto E. Trugenberger, *San Bernardino da Siena: considerazioni sullo sviluppo dell'etica economica cristiana nel primo Rinascimento* (Rome: Officina Poligrafica Laziale, 1951), pp. 84-85.

The characteristics and pros and cons of the *livello* have been pointed out by Nicola Lorenzo Barile and James Grubb. According to the former, the *livello* resulted in property transfer as soon as the borrower entered into a debt agreement,¹⁸³ in which he was usually responsible for the management of the holding. This point has been clarified by James Grubb, who has called attention to the “dual ownership of land” characterising the management policy of the Arnaldi, a Vicentine Renaissance family who possessed almost five thousand fields in Lisiera and Dueville, two villages near Vicenza. According to this policy, which consisted of twenty-nine-year long or perpetual leases, the *dominium directum*, that is the ownership of an emphyteutic holding leased to a tenant (borrower), was retained by the landlord (lender). On the other hand, the tenant had the *dominium utile*, that is the management and enjoyment of the owner’s assets.¹⁸⁴ In regard to this, in discussing the business strategies of Alberto Gozzi (1579-1664), a silk merchant from Bergamo who made his fortune in Venice, Richard Rapp has underscored that “[...] the risk of poor harvest was borne largely by the tenant” who rented Gozzi’s acreage.¹⁸⁵ In other words, by vesting the tenant with the *dominium utile*, a lender like Montagna did not have to cope with issues such as the choice of crops and agricultural techniques which guaranteed a good harvest. Gigi Corazzol has pinpointed three more aspects of the “dual ownership of land” that were disadvantageous to borrowers: burdensome payments in the form of harvest yields; notarial expenses, which the lender did not have to pay; and the fact that they usually obtained only two-thirds of the actual monetary value of the sold

¹⁸³ Nicola Lorenzo Barile, ‘Contratti di censo e Monti di Pietà. Problemi e prospettive di ricerca,’ in *Honos Alit Artes. Studi per il settantesimo compleanno di Mario Ascheri. Il cammino delle idee dal Medioevo all’Antico Regime*, eds Paola Maffei and Gian Maria Varanini (Florence: Firenze University press, 2014), p. 146.

¹⁸⁴ Grubb (1996), pp. 138-139.

¹⁸⁵ Rapp (1979), p. 285 note 29.

property.¹⁸⁶ James Grubb has also underlined the remarkable flexibility of purchase and leaseback loans, which derived from their variety of “prices,” sold properties, social standing of borrowers, payment methods and redemption terms.¹⁸⁷ The *livello* was financially advantageous to the landlord also because it was a long-term source of income, which could grant a return in the form of cash or saleable crops for months or years. Crops, particularly grain, could be sold speculatively on the market by the lender in case of price fluctuations of produce, as recently noted by Rachele Scuro.¹⁸⁸

Another advantage for lenders who agreed *livelli* was the legal support received from notaries. The role of the notary, who was a fundamental figure of the rural credit system in sixteenth-century Veneto, accounts for Montagna’s habit to notarise his purchase and leaseback loans. To the detriment of borrowers, notaries advised lenders and deliberately manipulated laws in order to disguise the irregularities of the *livelli*, which often verged on usury. The decisive role of notaries shows that the governmental system backed and whitewashed the economic interests of moneylenders.¹⁸⁹ The two notaries who initialled most of Montagna’s purchase and leaseback loans in the 1480s and 1490s were Francesco Sorio and Nicolò Ascoli, while Francesco Scolari and Marcangelo Franceschini formalised most of the deals negotiated by the painter in the sixteenth century. By notarising Montagna’s *livelli*, Francesco Sorio and Nicolò Ascoli authorised disguised loans that were meant to be more beneficial to their client than his borrowers. This occurred, for instance, on 16 September 1482, when Montagna bought a *campo* in Brendola from Giacomo

¹⁸⁶ Corazzol (1979), pp. 16, 27, 39.

¹⁸⁷ Grubb (1996), p. 122.

¹⁸⁸ Rachele Scuro, ‘Gli ebrei e le economie del contado: il caso di Lonigo in epoca rinascimentale,’ in *Storie di Lonigo. Immagini di una comunità veneta dal XII al XIX secolo*, eds Giovanni Florio and Alfredo Viggiano (Sommacampagna: Cierre, 2015), p. 80.

¹⁸⁹ Corazzol (1979), pp. 26, 86.

and Paganino of Brendola for 50 *lire di piccoli* and, on the same day, leased the field back to them for 3 *lire di piccoli* per year (App. 4, doct 14).¹⁹⁰ Nicolò Ascoli, who notarised the agreement, was effectively authorising a concealed purchased and leaseback loan, from which Montagna might have profited had Giacomo and Paganino paid the land rent regularly, and had they eventually redeemed the field for 50 *lire di piccoli*. The borrowers' obligation to pay Montagna an interest suggests that some degree of imbalance affected the mutuality of this negotiation.

Making loans could also be disadvantageous to the lender. In purchasing and leasing land back to the borrower, the lender supplied a needy person with ready cash, thus bearing the risk of not regaining the money anticipated due to the borrower's defaulting on the loan. In case of borrower's insolvency, however, the lender was entitled to assume the land in compensation.¹⁹¹ The Franciscan theologian Pietro di Giovanni Olivi (1248-1298) defined the lender's risk of incurring financial loss as *damnus emergens*, which justified the borrower's payment of interest on the loan received as reimbursement for the potential damage. Olivi's concept of *damnus emergens* was embraced in the fifteenth century by Bernardino of Siena, who considered an anticipated sale as worthy of compensation on the grounds that it was a deliberate act of charity. More precisely, Bernardino argued that selling some wheat, which could have been sold six months later at a higher price, to someone who was in urgent need of it, justified the practice of charging interest as compensation for the potential loss.¹⁹² Yaron Brook has stressed that "intereo," the Latin name for

¹⁹⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5097, anno 1482, fols 88-89, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 91, 103-104, 122; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 118.

¹⁹¹ Grubb (1996), p. 134.

¹⁹² Trugenberger (1951), pp. 105-107; Giacomo Todeschini, *Un trattato di economia politica francescana: il "De emptitionibus et venditionibus, de usuris, de restitutionibus" di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi*

interest, literally means “to be lost,” which is indicative of the economic risk taken by a creditor when agreeing to lend money to a debtor who may not be able to pay back or meet the payment deadline.¹⁹³ In light of this, when Montagna agreed to lend money to someone who was in want of it, he was losing an opportunity to invest it differently, such as at another time and price which could have been more cost-effective, regardless of whether he eventually was to assume the borrower’s land in compensation. Furthermore, if the borrower defaulted, Montagna probably felt that charging interest in advance was a justifiable decision, as when he sued Pietro Gasparini on 6 September 1508 for not bringing to the pawnshop 12 *staia* of wheat which Pier Antonio Mantovano di Barbarano owed him.¹⁹⁴ (App. 4, doct 57).

The function of risk-bearing in late medieval and Renaissance Italy has long been deemed “the crux of capitalism,” and rational speculation has been hailed as “the essence of capitalism.”¹⁹⁵ According to Werner Sombart, capitalism is an economic system “motivated by the desire for unlimited gain [...] characterized by exchange and money, by the concentration and circulation of wealth and by rational calculation.”¹⁹⁶ The origins of capitalism are a moot point,¹⁹⁷ although commercial reasons have usually been looked upon as

(Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1980), p. 85; Amleto Spicciani, *Capitale e interesse tra mercatura e povertà nei teologi e canonisti dei secoli XIII-XV* (Rome: Jouvence, 1990), pp. 86, 94; Joel Kaye, *Economy and Nature in the Fourteenth Century: Money, Market Exchange, and the Emergence of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 119; Yaron Brook, ‘The Morality of Moneylending: A Short History,’ *The Objective Standard* 2:3 (2007), pp. 12-13; Oreste Bazzichi, *Il paradosso francescano tra povertà e società di mercato: dai Monti di Pietà alle nuove frontiere etico-sociali del credito* (Cantalupa, Turin: Effatà, 2011), pp. 63-64.

¹⁹³ Brook (2007), p. 12.

¹⁹⁴ ASVi, *Magistrature giudiziarie vicentine, Banco della Ragione*, b. 2281 (anno 1508), cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 111; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 142.

¹⁹⁵ Hector Menteith Robertson, *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism: A Criticism of Max Weber and His School* (New York: Kelley & Millman, 1959), p. 46.

¹⁹⁶ Raymond Aron, *German Sociology*, trans. Mary and Thomas Bottomore (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 96; Philip Siegelman, ‘Introduction,’ in Werner Sombart, *Luxury and Capitalism*, trans. W. R. Dittmar (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. xviii.

¹⁹⁷ On this, see Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr, 1934); Werner Sombart, *Der moderne kapitalismus: historisch-systematische*

fundamental to the genesis of a capitalistic spirit during the Middle Ages. These reasons indeed led Florentine bankers to lend money in compensation for economic and social privileges as early as the late twelfth century.¹⁹⁸ This pursuit of monetary and economic rewards developed between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as bankers sought to turn a profit when catering to the financial needs of temporal and ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁹⁹ Both economic risk and rationalism are two key features of pre-reformation capitalism that enabled scholastic writers on economic questions to justify the morality of interest-bearing money-lending between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Jacques Le Goff has emphasised the seminal role of the concept of *ratio incertitudinis*, that is “uncertainty,” in the making of capitalism, inasmuch as it justified, to some extent, Christian usurers’ money-lending. In other words, usurers believed that lending money at interest for a just cause, such as fulfilling someone’s urgent need for ready cash, at the expense of their own financial interests, could be a way of shunning hell. Le Goff has also maintained that the reasons for Christian usurers, “the merchants of the future,” to be withheld “on the threshold of capitalism” were their fear of going to hell and the threats they could face in life on account of the Church’s prohibition on usury. However, again according to Le Goff, usurers’ hope to go to purgatory, rather than the netherworld, prompted them to channel the development of thirteenth-century economy and society into capitalism.²⁰⁰ Aside from a rational calculation of economic risk to avoid loss, estimation of the probable profit in monetary terms is an aspect that Pietro di Giovanni

darstellung des gesamteuropäischen wirtschstsleben von seinen anfängen bis zur gegenwart (München; Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1916-1927).

¹⁹⁸ Trugenberg (1951), p. 79.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

²⁰⁰ Jacques Le Goff, *La borsa e la vita. Dall'usuraio al banchiere* (Bari: Laterza, 1987, 2nd edition, first published 1986), pp. 41, 51.

Olivi regarded as peculiar to the financial operations of the merchants of his day.²⁰¹ Such a profit-seeking behaviour, based on weighing carefully the economic advantages and disadvantages of a negotiation, was not restricted to merchants in the thirteenth century, but also adopted by individuals who were totally unfamiliar with commerce.²⁰² Merchants, again according to Olivi, were entitled to expect to make a profit when borrowing money that they intended to invest in trade, and when re-selling something for a higher sum than it had initially cost them.²⁰³ Olivi's justification of merchants' profit-driven behaviour stemmed from his conviction that the community benefited from the role of merchants, who supplied the market with basic necessities in periods of famine rather than keeping them for themselves.²⁰⁴ Among thirteenth-century scholastic writers, Duns Scotus was yet another Franciscan theologian who advocated merchants' dear re-sale price on the grounds that it was beneficial to the community.²⁰⁵ Later in the fifteenth century, Olivi's moral justification of profit-driven behaviour was revived by the Dominican friar Annio da Viterbo, who claimed that charging interest was an industrious way for the Franciscan Monti di Pietà to lead the poor to become good citizens. Poor borrowers, by receiving a loan from the Monti, were deterred from committing bad actions due to their need of money, and were prompted to take maximum advantage of the loan so as to avoid that the Monte sold their pledge.²⁰⁶

It must be noted that the profit merchants expected to make was defined

²⁰¹ Kaye (1998), p. 121.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 17.

²⁰³ Pietro di Giovanni Olivi, 'De contractibus usurariis,' in Amleto Spicciati (ed.), 'Gli scritti sul capitale et sull'interesse di Fra Pietro di Giovanni Olivi,' *Studi francescani* 73 (1976), p. 323; Id. (1980), p. 51. See also Kaye (1998), p. 154.

²⁰⁴ Todeschini (1980), p. 58. See also Amleto Spicciati, *La mercatura e la formazione del prezzo nella riflessione teologica medievale* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1977), p. 221; Kaye (1998), pp. 121-122, 126-127, 154.

²⁰⁵ Kaye (1998), p. 140.

²⁰⁶ Bazzichi (2011), pp. 130-131.

by Olivi as “capitale,” that is as a surplus, or “valor superadiunctus,” which money can create when it is deliberately invested by a merchant.²⁰⁷ Giancarlo Andenna has stressed that Olivi introduced the concept of “capital” *de facto*, inspired by the theories on interest-bearing loans of the Dominican friar Raymond of Penyafort (c. 1175-1275) and the bishop of Ostia Henry of Segusio (c. 1200-1271).²⁰⁸ Bernardino of Siena’s acceptance of Olivi’s definition of “capital” in the fifteenth century has been hailed as symptomatic of the transition from the age of feudal natural economy to early capitalism, which fostered commercial, banking and industrial investments.²⁰⁹ According to Maurice Aymard, interest-bearing contracts are indeed part of the slow shift from feudalism to capitalism in early modern Italy,²¹⁰ and I believe that Montagna’s landownership needs to be appraised in light of this transition. Aymard has pointed out that a capitalist property already existed around 1500 in the northern Po Valley, including the flatlands of the Veneto, and that it resulted from extensive investments of urban capital in land aimed at enhancing its productivity.²¹¹ Among the economic factors which contributed to the making of capitalism in Italy around 1500, Aymard has included the calculation of production costs and tendency on the part of the investor to enhance capital productivity in the form of land rent and profit from agricultural use. The investor’s aim is given particular emphasis by Aymard, who has pointed out that urban capital was invested with a view not only to purchasing land, but also transforming properties and augmenting their

²⁰⁷ Olivi (1976), pp. 324-325. See also Spicciati (1990), pp. 87-88, 93; Kaye (1998), p. 122; Giancarlo Andenna, ‘Prestito, interesse e usura in età comunale, riflessioni economiche e canonistiche (XII-XIV secolo),’ in *Marco da Montegallo (1425-1496). Il tempo, la vita, le opere*, ed. Silvano Bracci (Padua: Centro Studi Antoniani, 1999), p. 38; Bazzichi (2011), p. 66.

²⁰⁸ Andenna (1999), p. 38.

²⁰⁹ Trugenberger (1951), p. 110.

²¹⁰ Maurice Aymard, ‘La transizione dal feudalesimo al capitalismo,’ in *Storia d’Italia. Annali*, 26 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1978), vol. 1, p. 1175.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1134, 1154.

productivity. Aymard has also specified that the owner's tendency to set generally usurious interests on monetary loans proved to be an effective means of generating an economic surplus.²¹²

In early modern Veneto, thus including the *terraferma* where Montagna concentrated his land investments especially in the 1480s and 1490s, the prevalence of the credit as opposed to open market resulted in urban owners' acquisition of land for debt.²¹³ It is against this economy of debts and credits that Montagna's long-term, revenue-bearing loans, which Grubb has described as the driving force of credit and debt markets,²¹⁴ ought to be considered. The artist's real estate activities took place mainly in the Vicentino, while he made only a few land investments in the Bresciano, his family's place of origin. For instance, a document dated 10 May 1476 attests that Montagna purchased a plot of land in Orzinuovi, his father Antonio Cincani's birthplace, from the Vicentine goldsmith Pietro, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi (App. 4, doct 8).²¹⁵ It is also worth recalling that, on two occasions, the painter decided to part with his Brescian lands, as proven by two notarial deeds drafted on 7 October 1488²¹⁶ and 25 February 1519 (App. 4, docts 24, 66).²¹⁷ The paucity of documents which mention Montagna's investments in the Bresciano could depend on the loss of archival evidence. It might also be due to the prohibition of *livelli* in that area until well into the seventeenth century,²¹⁸ and to the geographical distance of Brescia from Vicenza (around 118 km), where the

²¹² Ibid., pp. 1139-1140, 1154, 1175.

²¹³ Grubb (1996), pp. 136-137.

²¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 118, 152.

²¹⁵ ASVi, *Notarile, Giovanni Antonio Gallo*, b. 5042, fol. 55, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 109.

²¹⁶ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 94-95, 105-106; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 125-126.

²¹⁷ ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 111-112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 148-149.

²¹⁸ Corazzol (1979), pp. 19-20.

painter spent most of his life. On the other hand, the relative scarcity of documents on Montagna's real estate activities in the Padovano might be a consequence of the unfavourable agricultural conditions of its marshlands, which the Venetian historian Marin Sanudo described in his journey through the *terraferma* in 1483. Sanudo also related that the Veronese rural hinterland (*contado*), particularly the area crossed by the river Adige, was richer in fodder and livestock than the wetlands of the Padovano.²¹⁹ Montagna, however, was occasionally driven to make purchase and leaseback loans outside the Vicentino by the juridical and financial advantages of some places, as evidenced by two notarial documents. The first document, drawn up on 5 November 1499, attests that Montagna purchased ten *campi* in Cittadella, near Padua, from Pietro Calcia for 100 gold ducats and, on the same day, rented out the ten *campi* back to him for 6 gold ducats per year (App. 4, doct 50). The document specifies also that the tenant must redeem the *campi* within two years.²²⁰ Each *campo* in Cittadella therefore cost Montagna 10 gold ducats, in line with the average sum that he spent on a field, which ranged from around 2 ducats to around 16 ducats. The cost of land in the Padovano was lower than its price during the war of the League of Cambrai between 1508 and 1516. Indeed, according to the Venetian diarist Girolamo Priuli, land in the Padovano and the Trevigiano was considerably costly during the crisis of the war of the League of Cambrai in 1509, so much so that the price of a *campo* rose up to 30 or more ducats in the Trevigiano, and to around 25 ducats in the

²¹⁹ Marin Sanudo, *Itinerario per la terraferma veneziana nell'anno MCCCCLXXXIII*, ed. Rawdon Brown (Padua: Tipografia del Seminario, 1847), *passim*; Gaetano Cozzi, 'Ambiente veneziano, ambiente veneto. Governanti e governati nel dominio di qua dal Mincio nei secoli XV-XVIII,' in *Storia della cultura veneta. Il Seicento*, eds Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, 6 vols (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1984), vol. 4:2, pp. 499-500.

²²⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501," fols [6-9v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 136.

Padovano.²²¹ Montagna may have been prompted to buy real estate in Cittadella, located north of Padua, because Venetian patricians' pursuit of land had not been particularly strong in that area, as their main target for expansion was the eastern part of the Padovano. Since Venetians were keen on purchasing land especially in the villages of Camposampiero, Mirano, Oriago, Camponogara, Bovolenta and Noventa, on account of their proximity to Venice,²²² land in Cittadella may have been for Montagna cheaper than other areas of the Padovano. The second document is dated 4 November 1521, when Montagna received in-kind payments from the Scuola di San Giuseppe as partial compensation for the *Cologna Veneta Altarpiece* [Fig. 25; App. 4, doct 71]. As noted earlier, since the Scuola could not pay the last 30 ducats for Montagna's altarpiece, Luca Zorgna, *massaro* of the Scuola, had to hand over the crop income of 7 *staia* of wheat from two *campi* in Cologna Veneta to the painter. On the same day, Montagna rented out the property to Lucia, Francesco Facini's widow, who had been paying the crop income of 7 *staia* of wheat in Cologna Veneta to the Scuola in order to settle a debt.²²³ The management of land in the Veronese *contado* was a novelty for Montagna, as his holdings were mostly located in the Vicentino. One reason why the painter accepted the Scuola's payment method might have been that Cologna Veneta was one of the *terraferma* towns, alongside Padua, Feltre and Treviso, in which investors most successfully benefited from *livelli*.²²⁴ The juridical system in Cologna Veneta, as well as Legnago, was exceptional in the Veronese, in that a

²²¹ Girolamo Priuli, *I diarii di Girolamo Priuli: AA. 1499-1512*, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 24:3 (1939), ed. Roberto Cessi, 4 vols (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1938-1941), vol. 4, pp. 303, 328. Cited in Varanini (1996), vol. 5, p. 840.

²²² Varanini (1996), vol. 5, p. 814.

²²³ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fols 140v-141v, cited in Borenius (1909), pp. 217-218; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 167-168 doct 40; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 152-153.

²²⁴ Corazzol (1979), p. 75.

Venetian noble, the *podestà*, ruled in collaboration with municipal magistracies. The Venetian *podestà* was also in charge of the administration of other *terraferma* towns, such as Lonigo and Marostica in the Vicentino.²²⁵ Upon cessation of his tenure, the *podestà* had to give an account of his work in the *terraferma* to the Venetian Council of Ten, which had the last word in the setting of tax levels and fiscal income concerning the *terraferma*.²²⁶ In the case of Cologna Veneta, the *podestà* must have taken over the financial administration, for which the *capitano*, a Venetian noble, was normally responsible in the main cities.²²⁷ It must be noted that both the *podestà* and the *capitano* usually sidestepped making decisions that could have undermined the local privileges of the towns in which they operated.²²⁸ Such a lenient legislation should be taken into account when assessing Montagna's negotiations in Cologna Veneta, as he probably had leeway to benefit from the *livello* agreed with the widow Lucia.

By dint of *livelli*, not only might Montagna have regained the capital initially lent to the borrower, but he might have profited also from the land rent, in cash or kind, that his debtors had to pay until they redeemed the property. The revenue-bearing nature of the *livello* therefore rests on the surplus that the painter gained by charging interest in the form of land rent. For instance, a notarial deed drafted on 16 December 1488, mentions that the Vicentine cobbler Bernardino of Arzignano sold five *campi* in Montebello, near Vicenza, to Bartolomeo Montagna for 325 *lire* and 10 *soldi di piccoli* (App. 4, doct 28). Montagna promptly rented out these *campi* for 19.5 *staia* of wheat per

²²⁵ Angelo Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo nella società veneta del '400 e '500* (Bari: Laterza, 1964), pp. 45-46.

²²⁶ Gabriele Neher, 'Moretto and Romanino: Religious Painting in Brescia 1510-1550. Identity in the Shadow of La Serenissima,' Ph.D. thesis (Warwick University 1999), pp. 47-49.

²²⁷ Ventura (1964), pp. 45-46 note 10.

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 46.

year for three years to Bernardino, who, on 10 January 1491, repurchased the fields for the original sale price (App. 4, doct 33).²²⁹ The artist might have received between 390 and almost 450 kg per year, given that a *stajo* corresponded to 20/23 kg of wheat. The artist's potential profit from this deal is remarkable, since in the space of three years he might have been provided with over 1000 kg of grain, which could be either consumed or sold.

Five of the twelve notarial deeds pertaining to Montagna's real estate negotiations drafted in the 1480s attest that the interest charged by the artist consisted of payments in kind which his borrowers were to pay over a set period of time (App. 4, docts 25-29). According to James Grubb, a constant dearth of liquidity and the rising price of grain were the reasons for the increase in the recourse of non-monetarised exchanges, such as barter and in-kind payments in Quattrocento and Cinquecento Veneto.²³⁰ A dearth of liquidity resulted from the monetary reform enforced by the Venetian Republic in 1472, which, as noted by Luca Clerici, brought about a debasement and decreasing circulation of currency, particularly at the expense of the lower classes.²³¹ In his scrutiny of the account books of the Ospedale dei Proti, Clerici has also noticed an increase in payments in farm produce made to the Ospedale from the 1460s onward. The Ospedale rented out multiple plots of land in the Vicentine villages of Bolzano Vicentino, Lisiera and Vigardolo, to tenant farmers, whose payments of the land rent in cash overall dropped to 69%, albeit this percentage dwindled to 58% in Bolzano Vicentino. Clerici has

²²⁹ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5083, fols 122v-123r, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Zorzi (1916), pp. 94, 107; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 126-127; ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5300, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

²³⁰ Grubb (1996), pp. 116-118.

²³¹ Luca Clerici, 'Pagamenti in natura, velocità di circolazione della moneta e rivoluzione dei prezzi,' *Rivista di storia economica* 21:2 (2005), pp. 157-158.

also noted that the Ospedale leased its land through *livelli*, of which the institution had made extensive use since the middle of the fifteenth century in step with population growth.²³² As a result of the growing price of wheat and of so widespread a shortage of circulating money, James Grubb has argued that traders felt compelled to lend goods and money in return for future payment in crops. He has also noted that the quantity of wheat sold by the Arnaldi, a noble family of Vicenza, rose from a few *staia* early in the Quattrocento to 634 *staia* in 1477-78.²³³ All these factors may well account for Montagna's tendency, particularly in the 1480s and 1490s, to make disguised loans in exchange for long-scheduled payments in crops.

The relatively large amount of documents on Montagna's purchase and leaseback loans enables us to calculate the average interest rate, that is the proportion of a sum of money lent that the borrower must pay to the lender on an annual basis. The calculation of the interest rate, normally expressed in percentage, allows to gauge the extent to which the lender profited from a loan in the long run, and can be done with accuracy only in case of payments in cash, as there is a minor fluctuation in the interest rate. The interest in cash charged by Montagna varied very little over time, ranging from 5%, as proven by two notarial deeds drafted on 16 September 1482²³⁴ and 10 April 1484,²³⁵ to 6.5%, as can be inferred from a document drawn up on 10 May 1491 (App. 4,

²³² Id., 'Formazione, circolazione e dissoluzione dei diritti sulla terra in una società di Antico Regime, Vicenza, 1467-1500,' in *Il mercato della terra. Secc. XIII-XVIII, atti della trentacinquesima settimana di studi dell'Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica «F. Datini» (Prato, 5-9 maggio 2003)*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 2004), pp. 831-832, 836.

²³³ Grubb (1996), pp. 115, 118.

²³⁴ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5097, anno 1482, fols 88-89, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 91, 103-104, 122; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 118.

²³⁵ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5009, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 105; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 122-123.

docts 20, 36).²³⁶ This was the usual range of interest rates on loans in sixteenth-century Veneto.²³⁷ In the second half of the Quattrocento, the value of a Vicentine *staio* of wheat varied from 10 to 30 Vicentine *soldi*, a value that remained stable between 1467 and 1475, while varying very little in the following decades, as a result of a phase of moderate inflation.²³⁸ The entries of the rent books of the Ospedale dei Proti evidence that the monetary value of a *staio* of wheat in the Vicentino was 23 *soldi* (a little more than a *lira*) in April-May 1487, and 20 *soldi* (a *lira*) in May 1488.²³⁹ This is probably why the average 6% interest charged by Montagna does not seem to have varied in the five loans that he made in the late 1480s in exchange for in-kind payments (App. 4, docts 25-29). The painter, as noted earlier, regained the money lent on 16 December 1488, when the Vicentine cobbler Bernardino, son of the late Girolamo di Arzignano, sold him five *campi* in Montebello for 325 *lire* and 10 *soldi di piccoli*. On the same day, Montagna rented out these *campi* to Bernardino for 19.5 *staia* of wheat per year until 10 January 1491.²⁴⁰ Since the monetary value of a *staio* in the Vicentino varied from 10 to 30 *soldi* in the latter half of the Quattrocento, the amount of wheat that Montagna expected to receive from Bernardino each year was worth between 9.75 and 29.25 *lire*. The painter's profit from this deal, as noted earlier, is undeniable, as in three years it might have yielded between 1170 and 1350 kg of grain, with a monetary value

²³⁶ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, b. 5502, fols 79v-82r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 130.

²³⁷ Corazzol (1979), p. 39.

²³⁸ Luca Clerici (written communication, 10 March 2016).

²³⁹ IPAB, *Ospedale dei Proti*, b. 32 "Libri partite degli affittuali dell'Ospedale. 1486-1488," n. 13, fol. 52r, cited in Clerici (2001), pp. 132 doct 3, 151-153 doct 4. Moreover, again according to the account books of the Ospedale dei Proti, a Vicentine *staio* of wheat valued at 14 *soldi* in May 1479, 13 *soldi* in October 1479, 15 *soldi* in May 1486 (see Clerici (2001), p. 132 doct 3, and pp. 151-153 doct 4), and 12 *soldi* 1492-1493 (see Clerici (2005), p. 167).

²⁴⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5083, fols 122v-123r, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Zorzi (1916), pp. 94, 107; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 126-127; ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5300, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

between 29.25 and 87.75 *lire*. Since we know that the monetary value of 19.5 *staia* of wheat was between 9.75 and 29.25 *lire*, and that 325 *lire* and 10 *soldi di piccoli* had originally been lent by the artist to Bernardino, it is possible to estimate the annual interest rate of this deal to between 3 and 9%. It is likely that Montagna charged Bernardino approximately a 5% interest, as he did two months earlier, on 7 October 1488, when he leased nine *campi* in Orzinuovi to Giorgio Corniani for 22 *lire* per year (App. 4, doct 24).

Was Montagna's average annual interest rate of 5 to 6.5% licit? One way to verify if the artist legally lent at interest is to contrast his lending policy with the loan business carried out by Jews, Christians and charitable institutions, such as the Monti di Pietà. Money-lending had been a common practice in the Venetian Republic since the thirteenth century, when Paduan Christian lenders resorted to *livelli* or *affitti* as a reaction to anti-usury campaigns.²⁴¹ Later in the fourteenth century, a high number of Paduan lenders engaged in money-lending as a sideline instrumental in supplementing profits from other occupations.²⁴² Loan business was a widespread practice in the *terraferma*, as confirmed by civic authorities' decision in fifteenth-century Brescia and sixteenth-century Verona to curtail the lending power of Christians, mainly of Tuscan origins, by prompting Jewish lenders to settle in their towns. In Vicenza, Jews originating from central Italy settled as early as the second half of the fourteenth century,²⁴³ which suggests that lending money at interest must have been a well-established practice in Montagna's day. Further proof of the broad diffusion of lending activities in the Venetian mainland are the anti-

²⁴¹ Grubb (1996), pp. 121-122.

²⁴² Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), p. 444.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 440-445.

usury laws enforced by the government, as well as the anti-usury campaigns launched in the Veneto during the last quarter of the Quattrocento, when Montagna's investment spree took place (App. 2). In particular, the *Lex Vendramina* was enforced in 1477 so as to condemn the "moral sickness of any usurious contract," while in 1494 the doge extended a ban on illicit forms of grain loans.²⁴⁴ The establishment of the Monti di Pietà in the north of Italy in the 1480s was the Franciscan alternative to Jewish loan business.²⁴⁵ Vicenza was possibly the first large city of the Venetian Republic where a Monte di Pietà was founded in 1486,²⁴⁶ which suggests that there was an urge to curb the lending power of both Jewish and Christian lenders. The Monti were created to forestall the indebtedness of the poor, who were liable to request loans in periods of financial embarrassment caused by tax burden, price inflation and so forth.²⁴⁷ In late fifteenth-century Veneto, the main champion of the poor and one of the chief promoters of the Monti di Pietà was the Franciscan preacher Bernardino Tomitano of Feltre. His strong commitment to the assistance of beggars and paupers in Vicenza in the 1480s²⁴⁸ is indicative of an ongoing financial crisis of which usurers certainly sought to take advantage.

Is Montagna's revenue-bearing lending policy comparable to Jewish lenders' loan business? Or was it driven by the morality which often, though not always, inspired the small loan business of the Monti di Pietà? To judge from the terms of the *livelli* agreed by the artist, especially during his land-buying momentum in the 1480s and 1490s, his lending policy can be compared partly to the Monti's and partly to the Jews'. Two documents testify to

²⁴⁴ Grubb (1996), pp. 121-122.

²⁴⁵ Pullan (1971), pp. 450, 454.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 464.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 431.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 457.

relatively large loans made by the artist. On 10 May 1491,²⁴⁹ Montagna made a concealed loan of 300 *lire di piccoli* to Vincenzo, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto, while on 5 November 1499²⁵⁰ Pietro Calcia borrowed 100 gold ducats from Montagna (App. 4, docts 36, 50). The average 5 to 6.5% annual interest rate set by Montagna seems to have remained unchanged in the 1480s and 1490s, which points to his capability of not yielding to the temptation of lending money at potentially illicit interests. One would indeed expect that, when lending hefty sums, Montagna raised the interest rate so as to make it proportional to the size of the loan, according to a policy implemented by some of the Monti di Pietà. For instance, Giuseppe Garrani and, more recently, Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli have called attention to the Monte of Padua's decision to increase its interest rate from the initial 5 to 10% on loans exceeding 4 *lire*.²⁵¹ Even more profitable was the lending strategy of the Monte of Pistoia, which, according to Ilvo Capecchi and Lucia Gai, charged interest at the rate of 15% on loans inferior to 10 *soldi*, 20% on loans ranging between 11 and 15 *soldi*, and up to 30% on loans from 15 to 20 *soldi*.²⁵² Muzzarelli also mentions that the Monte of Cesena charged up to a 15% interest, while in Bologna it could charge up to a 30% interest. Despite these interest rates being occasionally high, the Monti usually lent small sums at a 5% interest. Indeed, we know that both the Monti of Conegliano Veneto, a little town near Treviso, and of Padua, charged interest at the rate of 5%, although the Paduan Monte

²⁴⁹ ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, b. 5502, fols 79v-82r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 130.

²⁵⁰ ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501," fols [6-9v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 136.

²⁵¹ Giuseppe Garrani, *Il carattere bancario e l'evoluzione strutturale dei primigenii Monti di Pietà. Riflessi della tecnica bancaria antica su quella moderna* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1957), p. 208; Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, *Il denaro e la salvezza: l'invenzione del Monte di Pietà* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001), p. 207.

²⁵² Ilvo Capecchi and Lucia Gai, *Il Monte di Pietà a Pistoia e le sue origini* (Florence: Olschki, 1976), pp. 137-141; Muzzarelli (2001), p. 210.

soon doubled its 5% interest on loans exceeding 4 *lire*.²⁵³ It should be remembered that the Monti's accountants ensured that interest charges were either used to cover the costs of operation, or returned to borrowers or their families.²⁵⁴ The souls of the officials of the Monti thus were not in danger of eternal damnation, which was one of the punishments threatening remorseless usurers in the Veneto as early as the thirteenth century.²⁵⁵ On the contrary, had Montagna raised his interest rate on the earlier mentioned loans of 300 *lire di piccoli* or 100 gold ducats, he would have seriously run the risk of committing usury and, as a consequence, jeopardising his loan business. In case of taking of usury, temporal authorities could indeed have enjoined the painter to make explicit restitution of his illicit profits, according to a procedure aimed at regulating the clandestine activity of unlicensed “occult” usurers.²⁵⁶ Yet, if the Venetian Senate committed to extirpating usury in Vicenza during the second half of the fifteenth century,²⁵⁷ the Vicentine commune treated usurers more leniently, as confirmed by municipal statutes. Indeed, the latter hardly addressed the issue, as they simply prompted in a rubric to disregard usurers' rights.²⁵⁸ It should be stressed that Vicentine patricians would have not felt

²⁵³ Garrani (1957), p. 208; Muzzarelli (2001), p. 207.

²⁵⁴ Benjamin N. Nelson, *The Idea of Usury, from Tribal Brotherhood to Universal Otherhood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, first published 1949), p. 22; Muzzarelli (2001), pp. 205, 208.

²⁵⁵ Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, *The Usurer's Heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni, and the Arena Chapel in Padua* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), p. 36.

²⁵⁶ For a thorough discussion on the issue of restitution of usury in late medieval and Renaissance Italy, see Benjamin N. Nelson, ‘Religion: The Usurer and the Merchant Prince: Italian Businessmen and the Ecclesiastical Law of Restitution,’ *Journal of Economic History* 7 (1947), pp. 104-122, especially 108-109, 112.

²⁵⁷ On Venetian Senate's attempt to enforce laws against usury, see James Grubb, *Firstborn of Venice: Vicenza in the Early Renaissance State* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 133-134. In particular, Grubb observes: “In 1456 the Senate tried to abolish the collection of interest on loans of wheat and to regulate cash loans disguised as future sales of wheat. In 1458 the Senate forbade rectors to authorize the payment of usurious charges, a measure aimed at the common practice of licensing Jewish moneylenders in the countryside. The great *lex Vendramina* of 1478, one of the few decrees directed both to the capital and to the mainland and overseas dominion, sweepingly forbade any sort of usurious transaction and authorized the podestà to enforce that ban.” (p. 134).

²⁵⁸ *Ius municipale vicentinum: cum additione partium illustrissimi dominij* (Venice: Ad instantiam Bartholomaei Contrini, 1567), f. 91r.

threatened had Vicentine councillors cracked down on usury, since, as noted by James Grubb, they managed to circumvent usury laws by relying on interest-bearing loans disguised as a lease of real estate, and by charging a low interest rate of around 6%.²⁵⁹ In light of this, given that Montagna also made disguised purchase and leaseback loans and charged low interest rates, his money-lending activity must have been licit.

The occasionally large size and lengthy duration of Montagna's loans are surprising in comparison to the small, short-term loans made by the Monti di Pietà. Indeed, the Monti could not lend more than three ducats per household at any given time in Padua, while loans in Treviso could not exceed two ducats.²⁶⁰ Yet the Monti's lending policy could vary in case of exceptional economic and historical conditions. For instance, the growing amount of paupers seeking to raise a loan from the Monti resulted from population growth and the ravages of the war of the League of Cambrai. During these plights, sometimes the Monti could not afford to lend more than one ducat per person, while other times being able to lend up to 5 ducats.²⁶¹ Brian Pullan has noted that the Monti, whose loans had a length ranging from six months in Treviso to one year in Mantua, lent on the guarantee of pledges, which could be imperishable, such as those made of gold or silver, or liable to wear, such as clothes and textiles. Pullan has also pointed out that it was safer to borrow money from a Monte di Pietà than from Jewish lenders, since "the risk of the pledge not covering the interest" was to be borne by the official of the Monte. Conversely, a Jewish lender was not willing to bear the same risk. Jewish banks

²⁵⁹ Grubb (1988), pp. 133-134.

²⁶⁰ Pullan (1971), p. 471.

²⁶¹ Vittorino Meneghin, *Bernardino da Feltre e i Monti di Pietà* (Vicenza: L. I. E. F., 1974), pp. 401-402.

in the *terraferma* could afford to lend remarkable amounts of cash for long periods of time on the security of written bonds.²⁶² Montagna, like Jewish lenders, relied on the security of written promises, as evidenced by several notarial deeds. The average annual interest rate of 5 to 6.5% charged by Montagna in the last two decades of the fifteenth century, however, makes his loan business appear considerably less cost-effective than Jews'. As early as the fourteenth century, Jewish lenders charged in Padua between 15 and 30% interest, which sometimes peaked at 40%.²⁶³ They also charged high interest rates in Vicenza during the first half of the fifteenth century, as proven by the loans made by Beniamino Finzi, the main Jewish-Vicentine banker, who charged between 15 and 20% in the 1430s.²⁶⁴ In comparison, the interest charged by Montagna seems to have been far more akin to the 5% interest usually demanded by the Monti di Pietà in late fifteenth to early sixteenth-century *terraferma*.

In conclusion, Montagna's lending policy, which seems to have never exceeded 6.5% interest, hinged on the profitable nature of the *livello*, which was *de facto* a roundabout subterfuge aimed at sidestepping usury laws. While Montagna's long-term and occasionally big loans made on the security of written bonds make his lending policy comparable to Jewish money-lending, his low interest rates are more in keeping with the safer loan business of the Monti di Pietà.

²⁶² Pullan (1971), pp. 471, 475.

²⁶³ Meneghin (1974), p. 266.

²⁶⁴ Rachele Scuro, 'La presenza ebraica a Vicenza e nel suo territorio nel Quattrocento,' *Reti medievali rivista* 6:1 (2005), p. 8.

Epilogue

In Chapter One, after a brief outline of Montagna's life, I have shown that the criticism levelled against Montagna's late paintings by scholars such as Bernard Berenson, Sidney Joseph Freedberg, Lionello Puppi and Franco Barbieri, is reminiscent of a Venice-oriented approach to art originally taken by Venetian art theorists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These theorists, such as Paolo Pino, Ludovico Dolce and Carlo Ridolfi, placed excessive emphasis on the art of Giovanni Bellini and Titian in Venice. This approach was in keeping with the Vasarian, Tuscan-oriented view of art, which focused on a large urban centre, Florence, and on Florentine artists, notably Michelangelo, at the expense of smaller artistic centres and foreign artists. I have also demonstrated that twentieth-century scholars' attempt to shift attention from Florentine to Venetian art resulted in a prejudiced understanding of artists who worked mainly in the Venetian mainland, such as Montagna. The limit of this approach lies in the fact that works of art made in Venice by leading artists like Bellini and Titian have too often been used as yardsticks to judge the quality of *terraferma* artistic production. In Section Three I have proven the centrality of Vicenza by highlighting its magnetic pull on leading artists working in Venice, such as Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano, who were commissioned to paint prestigious altarpieces by ambitious Vicentine commissioners. In line with Nicolas Bock's centre-periphery theory, I have pointed out that Vicenza was a seminal artistic centre of the *terraferma* which achieved cultural enrichment through the intentional importation of first-class foreign artists and works of art. My standpoint calls for the expansion of the interpretative spectrum of centrality in the studies of artistic centres of the Venetian mainland, and for a rejection of monocentric

theories. I believe that one single centre-periphery model cannot itself account for the complexity of Vicenza's centrality and its artistic exchanges with Venice and the *terraferma*. In light of this, I have placed Montagna's artistic career in its geographical context, the Venetian mainland, and highlighted the complex artistic exchanges between the painter and other *terraferma* artists, such as Francesco Bassano, Tommaso da Lugano, Gerolamo dai Libri and Giovanni Maria Falconetto. These exchanges stand testament to a two-sided affair between Vicenza and the *terraferma*, in which the former was often, though not always, the artistic centre influencing the latter's artistic production. I have also demonstrated that Montagna's execution of the *San Marco Teleri* is indicative of a two-directional artistic relationship between Venice and Vicenza, inasmuch as the painter was summoned to Venice to carry out a highly prestigious commission. In Section Four I have explored Montagna's mobility by availing myself of published archival documents on his real estate and artistic activities. The painter's artistic geography differed from that of many Renaissance artists from the Venetian Republic, whose peripatetic life he could not have, owing to the numerous artistic and real estate activities which tied him to the *terraferma*. Montagna's receptiveness to foreign styles caused by his displacement, and the ways in which exposure to new artistic environments spurred him to develop and emphasise certain stylistic and compositional features, are also key aspects of this section. In the last section I have pinpointed some key, yet overlooked, aspects of Montagna's style, such as his original handling of elements of diverse origin and eclecticism, and of his commissioners, particularly their aesthetic needs and taste. These aspects evidence that Montagna was capable of being critically independent by intentionally deviating from the known pattern. His active response to artistic otherness, which was certainly fuelled by

the lack of a burdensome artistic tradition characterising metropolitan centres like Venice, is discussed from a non-Venetian vantage point. Furthermore, I have shown the extent to which commissioners' aesthetic demands may have impacted on artists' original approach to artistic tradition.

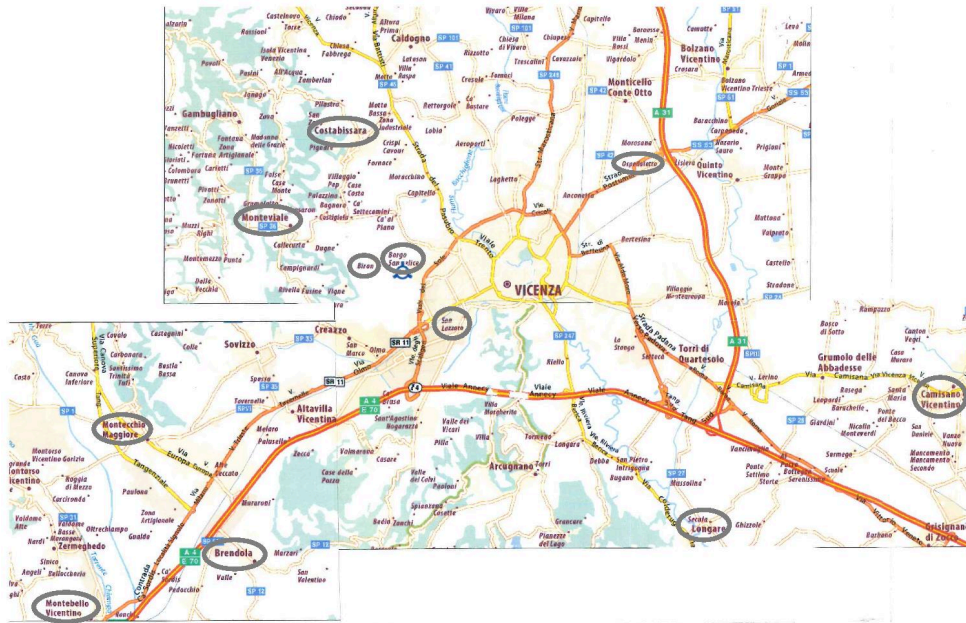
In Chapter Two, after warning the reader against the practical and methodological problems associated with the study of private devotional paintings, I have reconstructed the religious, social and economic background against which these works need to be assessed. In regard to this, I have zeroed in on the diffusion of the cult of the Virgin Mary and of a new form of spirituality felt more directly, as well as on the growing consumerism in early modern Italy. I have also shed light on the degree to which the serial production of Montagna's paintings of the Virgin and Child responded to the art market demand. Montagna, like Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano, understood and exploited the expressive power of his private devotional paintings, whose devotional aids inspired religious devotion and arrested the faithful's attention. I have suggested ways of distinguishing devotional pictures possibly executed on commission from those likely made for speculative sale. Only by drawing such a distinction can the entrepreneurial mentality and market-determined behaviour of Montagna and his workshop assistants be fully grasped. I have therefore assessed paintings for domestic devotion from a broader perspective that enables them to be regarded as products of the same marketing strategy, rather than simply as self-contained works unrelated to the art market demand. Put another way, I have regarded private devotional paintings potentially made for speculative sale as serial commodities designed to meet the devotional and aesthetic needs and taste of the faithful. These ready-made paintings stemmed from a business-oriented workshop that

exploited the open market as an alternative but equally valuable outlet. This chapter has also provided a glimpse of the technical, iconographic and stylistic features of Montagna's paintings, which show how seriality was conditional on the workshop's business plan and profit-seeking approach to artistic production. Seriality particularly relied on the replication of and variation on pattern drawings by means of cartoons, whose use in Montagna's workshop is suggested by the presence of tracing or *spolvero* dots along the contour lines of some Virgin and Child paintings. Another fundamental aspect discussed in this chapter is the role of spectatorship in Montagna and his assistants' choice of the design of Virgin and Child paintings, which they replicated and occasionally varied so as to elicit domestic devotion. Their repetition of single motifs and modification of the original design through the addition of saints are indicative of their search for effective means of inspiring devotees' meditation and fostering their engagement with their paintings.

In Chapter Three, I have taken an interdisciplinary approach inasmuch as I have regarded art history and economic history as two inextricably connected fields in my thesis. I have stressed the paramount importance of assessing Montagna from a broader perspective, one that takes into account both his landownership and artistic activity, which have hardly been examined in parallel with one another. The analysis and comparison of Montagna's revenue from artistic and real estate activities have been instrumental in shedding light on many unexplored aspects: the interrelationship of art and landownership in the artist's life; his income from artistic commissions, through which he occasionally earned remarkable sums; his business acumen; his desire to foster his socioeconomic status by relying on the prestige attached to owning land in the *terraferma*, and on the revenue potential of his rental

properties; his networking ability, through which he managed to reinforce his ties with different social classes, from artisans to patricians; and his close relationship with the Vicentino. My thesis has also shown that Montagna invested extensively in real estate in the Vicentino as a sideline through which he received payments in cash or kind, especially during the 1480s and 1490s. I have devoted particular attention to purchase and leaseback loans, which were the driving force of Montagna's landownership, as well as a long-term and low-risk source of income. The painter's shrewd exploitation of the juridical, social and economic advantages of interest-bearing loans is the most tangible evidence of his business acumen, which I have contextualised by contrasting his money-lending with the lending practices of the Monti di Pietà and the Jews.

Appendix One

Map of Montagna's Real Estate Activities in the *Terraferma*

Appendix Two

Bartolomeo Montagna's Real Estate Activities in the *Terraferma*

Source	Date and Place	Parties to Sale/Rent	Real Estate and Location	Money and Goods Transacted
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Galeotto Aviano</i> , b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r (App. 4, doct 5)	1467, January 31. Vicenza	Sellers: Giovanni, Paolo and Francesco Cincani, (on behalf of their brother Bartolomeo Montagna). Buyer: Alvise Antonio Loschi	Twenty-five <i>campi</i> in Biron	907 <i>lire</i> and 12 <i>soldi</i>
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Giovanni Antonio Gallo</i> , b. 5042, fol. 55 (App. 4, doct 8)	1476, May 10. Vicenza	Seller: Pietro, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A plot of land of c. 1 <i>plodio</i> in Orzinuovi	25 gold ducats (of which 14 already paid by Giovanni Cincani, Montagna's brother)
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli</i> , b. 5097, anno 1482, fols 88-89 (App. 4, doct 14)	1482, September 16. Vicenza	Sellers: Giacomo and Paganino of Brendola. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A <i>campo</i> in Brendola. On the same day, Montagna rents it out to Giacomo and Paganino for 3 <i>lire di piccoli</i> per year for ten years. Giacomo and Paganino can redeem the field after ten years by paying 50 <i>lire di piccoli</i>	50 <i>lire di piccoli</i> Annual interest rate: circa 6.5%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli</i> , b. 5097 (App. 4, doct 16)	1483, September 1. Vicenza	Seller: Domenico, son of the late Vincenzo of Costabissara. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	Four <i>campi</i> in Costabissara. On the same day, Montagna rents them out to Domenico for 6 <i>lire di piccoli</i> per year for ten years	100 <i>lire</i> Annual interest rate: around 6%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 5009 (App. 4, doct 17)	1484, March 5. Vicenza	Seller: Confraternita di San Bernardino (represented by the painter Giampietro, Bono dal Ferro, Gabriele of Milano and Battista Magrè); Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A house in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo in Vicenza	200 ducats (paid by 1490)

ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 5009 (App. 4, doct 19)	1484, April 1. Vicenza	Payer: Bartolomeo Montagna. Payee: Giacomo Gualdo	A house in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo in Vicenza	20 ducats (part payment for the 200 ducats which Montagna will finish to pay to Giacomo Gualdo by 1490, see above)
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 5009 (App. 4, doct 20)	1484, April 10. Vicenza	Seller: Marzolino, son of the late Gregorio of Costafabbrica. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A plot of around a <i>campo</i> in Costafabbrica. On the same day, Bartolomeo rents it out to Marzolino for 3 <i>lire</i> per year. The <i>campo</i> can be redeemed by Marzolino within four years, although he redeems it after a year	50 <i>lire</i> Annual interest rate: 6.5%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 5010 (App. 4, doct 24)	1488, October 7. Vicenza	Seller: Bartolomeo Montagna. Buyer: Friar Antonio Orsini	Some plots of land in Orzinuovi. Antonio Orsini pays for the plots half in cash, half by granting Montagna the credit of 445 <i>lire</i> that he has lent to Giorgio Corniani. On the same day, Corniani, who cannot settle his debt of 445 <i>lire</i> , sells nine <i>campi</i> in Orzinuovi to Montagna, who rents out the fields to Corniani for 22 <i>lire</i> per year for six years	919 <i>lire</i> and 1 <i>soldo di pianeti bresciani</i> (of which 445 <i>lire</i> paid in land) Annual interest rate: around 5%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 5010 (App. 4, doct 25)	1488, November 25. Vicenza	Seller: Gaspare Chemin. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	Two <i>campi</i> in Montecchio Maggiore. On the same day, Montagna rents them out to Gaspare Chemin for 6 <i>stata</i> of wheat per year. Chemin is entitled to redeem the <i>campi</i>	100 <i>lire di piccoli</i> Annual interest rate: around 6%

ASVi, <i>Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli</i> , b. 5083, fol. 119 (App. 4, doct 26)	1488, December 8. Vicenza	Sellers: Vincenzo and Francesco, sons of the late tailor Bardino. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A plot of land of around two <i>campi</i> in Ospedaletto. On the same day, Montagna rents them out to Vincenzo and Francesco for 6 <i>staia</i> of wheat per year. Vincenzo and Francesco can redeem the <i>campi</i> within ten years	100 <i>lire di piccoli</i> Annual interest rate: around 6%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 5010 (App. 4, doct 27)	1488, December 9. Vicenza	Seller: Meneghino, son of the late Cecchino of Arcugnano. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	One and 1/2 <i>campi</i> in Borgo Berga. On the same day, Montagna rents them out to Meneghino for 3 <i>staia</i> of wheat per year. Meneghino can redeem the <i>campi</i> by paying 50 <i>lire di piccoli</i>	50 <i>lire di piccoli</i> Annual interest rate: between around 6%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli</i> , b. 5083, fols 122v-123r (App. 4, doct 28)	1488, December 16. Vicenza	Seller: Bernardino, son of the late Girolamo of Arzignano. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	Five <i>campi</i> in Montebello. On the same day, Montagna rents them out to Bernardino for 19.5 <i>staia</i> of wheat per year for two years	325 <i>lire</i> and 10 <i>soldi di piccoli</i> Annual interest rate: 6%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli</i> , b. 5102, fol. 64 (App. 4, doct 29)	1489, May 12. Vicenza	Seller: Giovanni Antonio, son of the late Marco. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A plot of around two <i>campi</i> in Borgo di Porta Nuova. On the same day, Montagna rents them out to Giovanni Antonio for 6 <i>staia</i> of wheat per year for eight years	100 <i>lire</i> Annual interest rate: around 6%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 5011 (App. 4, doct 30)	1490, March 18. Vicenza	Payer: Bartolomeo Montagna. Payee (convent of San Lorenzo in Vicenza/ Giacomo Gualdo)	A house in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo in Vicenza	50 ducats (last instalment)

ASVi, <i>Notarile, Gregorio Ferro</i> , b. 5300 (App. 4, doct 33)	1491, January 10. Vicenza	Seller: Bartolomeo Montagna. Buyer: Bernardino, son of the late Girolamo of Arzignano	Five <i>campi</i> in Montebello	325 <i>lire</i> and 10 <i>soldi di piccoli</i>
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno</i> , b. 5502, fols 65v-66v (App. 4, doct 34)	1491, January 24. Vicenza	Seller: Meneghino Molendinario. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	Part of a house in <i>sindicaria</i> di Carpagnon or del Duomo in Vicenza. Meneghino sells the property to Montagna, who, a few days later, rents it out to the painter Girolamo, son of the late baker Stefano	6 ducats “super uno quadreto picto”
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno</i> , b. 5502, fols 79v-82r (App. 4, doct 36)	1491, May 10. Vicenza	Seller: Vincenzo, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A <i>campo</i> in Biron and three <i>campi</i> in Borgo San Felice. On the same day, Montagna rents them out to Vincenzo for 15 <i>lire di piccoli</i> per year	300 <i>lire di piccoli</i> Annual interest rate: around 5%
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Zanechini</i> , b. 5377, fols 33r-34r (App. 4, doct 37)	1493, April 20. Vicenza	Negotiation between Elisabetta, Alvise Antonio Loschi's wife, and Bartolomeo Montagna	Some plots of land in Biron	100 ducats
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 4988 (App. 4, doct 38)	1493, September 12. Vicenza	Seller: Giovanni Bartolomeo Faccio. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A <i>campo</i> with homestead in San Lazzaro. Faccio is entitled to redeem the property	125 <i>lire di piccoli</i>
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 5010 (App. 4, doct 39)	1494, February 13. Vicenza	Seller: Bartolomeo Montagna. Buyer: Meneghino, son of the late Cecchino of Arcugnano	One and 1/2 <i>campo</i> in Borgo Berga	50 <i>lire di piccoli</i>

ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 4988 (App. 4, doct 40)	1494, June 17. Vicenza	Seller: Bartolomeo Montagna. Buyer: Giovanni Bartolomeo Faccio	A <i>campo</i> with homestead in San Lazzaro	125 <i>lire di piccoli</i>
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Sorio</i> , b. 4988 (App. 4, doct 41)	1494, September 12. Vicenza	Seller: Giovanni Cincani, Montagna's brother. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	Four small plots of land in Monteviale	56 ducats
ASBr, <i>Notarile Giovanni Antonio de Milis</i> (App. 4, doct 43)	1495, January 14. Orzinuovi	Seller: Giorgio Corniani. Buyer: Francesco Corniani, Giorgio Corniani's nephew (on behalf of his father Simone)	Giorgio Corniani sells some land to his brother Simone for 445 <i>lire bresciane</i> , which Giorgio gives Montagna so as to settle a debt	445 <i>lire bresciane</i>
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli</i> , b. 5108, fols 156v-157r (App. 4, doct 44)	1496, May 19. Vicenza	Seller: Bartolomeo Montagna. Buyer: Bartolomeo Vicentini	Two plots of land in Camisano	100 <i>lire</i>
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Scolari</i> , b. 177, fasc. "Francesco Scolari. 1497-1498", fols [1-2] (App. 4, doct 46)	1497, November 13. Vicenza	Seller: Bartolomeo Montagna. Buyer: Giorgio Corniani	Nine <i>campi</i> in Orzinuovi	445 <i>lire bresciane</i>
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Scolari</i> , b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501", fols [6-9v] (App. 4, doct 50)	1499, November 5. Vicenza	Seller: Pietro Calcia. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	Ten <i>campi</i> in Cittadella. On the same day, Montagna rents them out to Pietro Calcia for 6 gold ducats per year. Calcia can redeem the fields within two years	100 gold ducats Annual interest rate: 6%

ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Scolari</i> , b. 177, fasc. "1499-1501", fol. [5v] (App. 4, doct 51)	1503, February 15. Vicenza	Seller: Alberto Godi. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	Some plots of land with outbuildings in Longare and Secula	N/A
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Francesco Scolari</i> , b. 177, fasc. "1508", fols [1-2] (App. 4, doct 56)	1508, May 20. Vicenza	Lessor: Bartolomeo Montagna. Lessee: Francesco, son of Iorio of Monteviale	Four plots of land in Monteviale, originally purchased by Montagna from his brother Giovanni Cincani in 1494	9.5 <i>staia</i> of wheat per year for ten years
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini</i> , b. 6075 (App. 4, doct 63)	1517, July 2. Vicenza	Lessor: Bartolomeo Montagna. Lessee: Arcangelo Romitani	A fireplace and washbasin located on the ground floor of Montagna's house	3 gold ducats (one-year rent)
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini</i> , b. 6075 (App. 4, doct 65)	1518, January 11. Vicenza	Lessor: Bartolomeo Montagna. Lessee: Stefano Sogaro	A workshop with fireplace located in Montagna's house	5 ducats (one-year rent)
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini</i> , b. 6075 (App. 4, doct 66)	1519, February 25. Vicenza	Seller: Antonio Cincani (on behalf of his uncle Bartolomeo Montagna)	Montagna's properties in Orzinuovi	N/A
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini</i> , b. 6075 (App. 4, doct 67)	1519, August 5. Vicenza	Vincenzo, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto. Compensation recipient: Bartolomeo Montagna	Two plots of land in San Felice	Compensation
ASVi, <i>Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini</i> , b. 6075 (App. 4, doct 68)	1519, August 31. Vicenza	Debtor: Vincenzo, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto. Creditor: Bartolomeo Montagna	Some plots of lands in San Felice	162 <i>lire di piccoli</i> (settlement of rent arrears)

ASVi, <i>Notarile</i> , <i>Domenico Cisotti</i> , b. 5565, fol. 450 (App. 4, doct 69)	1521, February 25. Vicenza	Seller: Nicolò Pina, son of the late Leonardo of Monteviale. Buyer: Bartolomeo Montagna	A <i>campo</i> in Monteviale. On the same day, Montagna rents it out to Nicolò Pina for half a <i>staio</i> of wheat per year	2 ducats Annual interest rate: N/A
ASVi, <i>Notarile</i> , <i>Francesco Zanecchini</i> , b. 5389, fols 140v- 141v (App. 4, doct 71)	1521, November 4. Vicenza	Lessor: Bartolomeo Montagna. Lessee: Lucia, Francesco Facini's widow	A plot of land of around two <i>campi</i> in Cologna Veneta	7 <i>staia</i> of wheat (monetary value: 30 ducats) per year

Appendix Three

Payments for Montagna's Works of Art

Date	Artist and Work of Art	Location	Commissioner	Dimensions and Cost of Work of Art
1476, October 29	Gianfrancesco Somaio and Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Donor and Sts Peter, Justine, Paul, Catherine, Jerome, Leontius, Prosdocius and Carpophorus</i>	Lost altarpiece. Formerly in the Santi Pietro and Giustina Chapel, cathedral of Santa Maria Annunciata, Vicenza	Canon Gaspare of Schio	N/A 60 ducats (30 ducats per painter, including expenses for production material and installation)
1478, April 23	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>The Virgin with Two Saints</i>	Lost altarpiece. Formerly in the church of Piovene	Geraldo, son of the late Giacomo dean of Piovene, Domenico son of the late Gaspare procurator of Matteo di Francesco, <i>massaro</i> of the church of Piovene, and Bonifacio son of the late Francesco da Piovene	N/A 43.5 ducats (including 1.5 ducats for the decoration of the framework)
1483, February 23	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>The Flood and The Creation of the World</i>	Lost <i>telari</i> . Formerly in the Scuola Grande di San Marco, Venice	Scuola Grande di San Marco	N/A 200 ducats (100 ducats per <i>telero</i>)
1484, March 10	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist, Bartholomew, Augustine, Sebastian and Three Musical Angels</i>	Pinacoteca Civica, Vicenza. Formerly in San Bartolomeo, Vicenza	Canon Giovanni Battista Trento	460 x 240 cm 100 gold ducats (including expenses for carving and gilding of the frame).

1484, October 4	Pietro Antonio da Lendinara (inlaid choir stalls) and Bartolomeo Montagna (preparatory drawings)	Santa Maria di Monte Berico, Vicenza	Prior Antonio da Orgiano	N/A 4.5 gold ducats (for each of the 24 backrests of the choir stalls).
1487, March 9	Bartolomeo Montagna, lost frescoes	Formerly in the Palazzo del Comune of Bassano	City Council of Bassano	N/A 6 <i>lire</i> and 4 <i>soldi</i>
1490	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist, Jerome and Three Musical Angels</i>	Certosa Museum, Pavia	Prior Matteo Valerio	247 x 175 cm 326 <i>lire</i>
1495, October 8 - 1496, May 26	Bartolomeo Montagna, Four roundels with <i>The Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John</i> , and <i>The Adoration of the Child with Sts James and Anthony the Abbot, and the Donor Giampietro Proti</i>	Lost frescoes. Formerly in the Proti Chapel, cathedral of Santa Maria Annunciata, Vicenza	Pietro Bissari, Bartolomeo of Schio and Giovanni Battista Gualdo, governors of the hospital	N/A 40 Vicentine ducats, a sack of wheat, a cart of wine and “all the necessary ultramarine blue”
1497, January 20- 1499	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Andrew, Monica, Ursula, Sigismund and Three Musical Angels</i>	Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan. Formerly in San Michele, Vicenza	Bartolomeo Squarzi	410 x 260 cm; around 160 <i>lire</i> and 18 ducats (circa 121 ducats) (of which 69 ducats paid in land)
1499, July 13	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>The Virgin and Child Enthroned (Reunited) with Three Musical Angels</i> (?)	Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon. Formerly in the cathedral of Santa Maria Annunciata, Vicenza	Archdeacon Graziadio Bonafino and chamberlain Leonardo of Ancona (on behalf of the bishop of Vicenza, Giovanni Battista Zeno)	105 x 73 cm (Lyon central panel) 180 ducats

1504, March 24 - 1506, February 6	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>Scenes from the Life of St Blaise</i>	San Biagio Chapel, Santi Nazaro e Celso, Verona	Prior Sigismondo Guadagnino	N/A 150 ducats
1506, July 21 and September 18	Bartolomeo Montagna (one hundred portraits of the bishops of Padua)	Palazzo Vescovile, Padua	Bishop Pietro Barozzi	N/A 250 ducats
1512, February 6	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone</i>	Scuola del Santo, Padua	Guardian Nicola <i>de Strata</i>	87 x 441 cm 20 ducats
1514, June 16	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>St Mary Magdalen Enthroned with Sts Jerome, Paula (?), Monica and Augustine</i>	Santa Corona, Vicenza	Piera Porto	55.5 x 83.5 cm (each panel) 418 x 267 cm (predella) 40 ducats and 19 <i>grossi</i>
1517, November 24	Bartolomeo and Benedetto Montagna, unknown paintings	Palazzo del Podestà, Vicenza	Deputies Montano Barbarano, Antonio Ferramosca, Angelo Caldogno, Matteo of Schio and Ettore Loschi	N/A 6 <i>lire</i> and 4 <i>soldi</i> (Bartolomeo); 12 <i>lire</i> (Benedetto)
1521, November 4	Bartolomeo Montagna, <i>Adoration of the Shepherds with Sts Sebastian and Job</i>	Santa Maria, Cologna Veneta.	Scuola di San Giuseppe	180 x 162 cm 80 ducats (of which 30 ducats paid in kind)

Appendix Four

Register of Archival Documents

1. 1442, May 29. Vicenza

Bettino Cincani, Antonio Cincani's brother and Bartolomeo Montagna's uncle, moves from Orzinuovi to the Vicentino to work as a farmer for the Vicentine noble **Pietro dal Gorgo**. Bettino will be paid 40 ducats for one year, starting from 1 August.

ASVi, *Notarile, Bortolo Bassan*, b. 4541, fols 12v-13r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 87, 100; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 101.

2. 1445, December 20. Vicenza

The Vicentine citizen **Antonio Nicolò Loschi**, lawyer and half-brother of the humanist Antonio Loschi, rents out lands, pastures, houses and a kiln in Biron and other Vicentine areas to **Bettino Cincani** for 250 ducats per year for nine years. Pietro dal Gorgo, for whom Bettino worked three years before, acts as legal witness.

ASVi, *Ufficio del Registro, Atti*, "Libro primo dell'anno 1445", fols 885r-891v, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 101.

3. 1455, May 10. Vicenza

The brothers **Antonio** and **Nicolò**, sons of the late Gaspare of Monteviale, sell a plot of land of around two *campi* in Monteviale to **Bettino Cincani**, who

lives in Biron. On the same day, **Bettino** rents out the same plot to **Antonio** and **Nicolò** in return for 4 tubs of wine per year. **Antonio** and **Nicolò** must hand over the tubs to **Bettino** at the Feast of San Martino, and can redeem the *campi* within eight years for 16 ducats.

ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 21/II, fol. 93r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 87, 101; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 102-103.

4. 1455, September 2. Vicenza

The brothers **Pietro**, **Nicolò** and **Zanino**, sons of the late Bartolomeo of Monteviale, sell two plots of land in Monteviale for 16 ducats to **Bettino Cincani**, who lives in Biron. On the same day, **Bettino** rents out the plots to **Pietro**, **Nicolò** and **Zanino** for 4 *lire* per year, which must be paid at Christmas. **Pietro**, **Nicolò** and **Zanino** can redeem the plots within eight years by paying 16 ducats.

ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 21/II, fol. 116v, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 87, 101 (Zorzi erroneously dates the document to 11 September); Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 103.

5. 1467, January 31. Vicenza

The brothers **Giovanni**, **Paolo** and **Francesco Cincani**, sons of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, on behalf of their brother **Bartolomeo Montagna**, sell 25 *campi* in Biron to the Vicentine citizen and noble **Alvise Antonio Loschi**, son of the late Bartolomeo, for 907 *lire* and 12 *soldi*. The *campi* were purchased on 21 July 1456 by **Bettino Cincani** from **Antonio Nicolò Loschi**, who then

rented them from **Bettino** with the understanding that he could have redeemed the property after ten years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, b. 23/III, fols 36r-38r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 106.

6. 1469, January 30. Vicenza

The brothers **Paolo, Giovanni, Francesco** and **Bartolomeo Cincani**, sons of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, divide up the possessions of their parents and uncle **Bettino Cincani**. **Paolo** is due the largest part of them, that is, half of his father's house, including its furniture, plus some lands in Orzinuovi. **Giovanni** inherits the family's wool mill in Vicenza, the warehouse in Venice, where **Bartolomeo Montagna** is based on this date ("...et Bartholomeus in civitate Venetiarum..."), and the rental income from some properties in the Vicentino. Both **Francesco** and **Bartolomeo** inherit a quarter of the paternal house and the rental income from some plots of land in Orzinuovi, plus they receive 84 and 100 ducats, respectively, from their brother **Giovanni**. **Francesco** also receives a rental income of 4 *lire* from **Nicolò Bioni, Pietro** and **Zanino of Monteviale**.

ASVi, *Notarile, Daniele Ferretto*, b. 4618, anno 1469, fols 23v-24, 31r-32r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 88-89, 102-103; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 106-108.

7. 1474, August 28. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna witnesses a deal between the Vicentine patrician **Brazzoduro Brazzoduri** and **Gregorio Restello**.

ASVi, *Notarile*, *Antonio Sarasin*, b. 4970, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 89 note 6; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 108.

8. 1476, May 10. Vicenza

The Vicentine **Pietro**, son of the late goldsmith Antonio of Orzinuovi, sells a plot of land in Orzinuovi to **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 25 gold ducats, of which 14 ducats have already been paid by Montagna's brother **Giovanni Cincani**.

ASVi, *Notarile*, *Giovanni Antonio Gallo*, b. 5042, fol. 55, cited in Lucco (2014), p. 109.

9. 1476, October 29. Vicenza

The Vicentine canon **Gaspare of Schio** commissions a lost polyptych of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Donor and Sts Peter, Justine, Paul, Catherine, Jerome, Leontius, Prosdocimus and Carpophorus* from **Gianfrancesco Somaio** and **Bartolomeo Montagna** for the Chapel of Santi Pietro e Giustina in the cathedral of Vicenza. The painting must be finished within 15 months and will cost 60 ducats. The painters will have to pay for production material and the installation of the altarpiece.

ASVi, *Notarile*, *Gregorio Malo*, b. 4643, cited in Mantese (1964a), pp. 248-249 doct 1; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 109-110.

10. 1478, April 23. Vicenza

Geraldo, son of the late Giacomo dean of Piovene, **Domenico**, son of the late Gaspare procurator of Matteo di Francesco and *massaro* of the church of Piovene, and **Bonifacio**, son of the late Francesco of Piovene, agree with **Bartolomeo Montagna** that he will paint an altarpiece with the *Virgin and Two Saints* for the church of Piovene. Bartolomeo's work will cost 43.5 ducats, and his brother **Giovanni Cincani** stands surety for the painter. **Giovanni Battista Gualdo** acts as legal witness.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 4985, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 90, 103, 162-163 doct 34; Puppi (1962), pp. 30, 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 113.

11. 1480, April 1. Vicenza

Chiara Squarzi, Giacomo Squarzi's daughter and Giovanni Andrea Trento's widow, dictates a codicil in her will. The painters **Bartolomeo Montagna** and **Clemente of Verona** act as legal witnesses.

ASVi, *Notarile, Giovanni Antonio Gallo*, b. 5043, fol. 33v, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 45 doct 1; Borenius (1909), p. 4 note 5; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 114.

12. 1481, February 28. Vicenza

Giacoma, Giovanni Violini of Campedello's widow, who must pay for the polyptych commissioned by the deceased **Gaspare of Schio**, agrees to pay **Bartolomeo Montagna** 30 ducats in two instalments between 1482 and 1483.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, reg. “Prothocollus mei Francisci de Scollaribus. 1478-1482”, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 90, 103, 164-165 doct 35; Puppi (1962), p. 75; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 115-116.

13. 1482, August 15. Venice

The **Scuola Grande di San Marco** of Venice (10 votes for and 9 against) decrees that some works of art, among which two *teleri* for the main hall, shall be executed. The document, however, does not mention **Bartolomeo Montagna**.

ASVe, *Scuola Grande di San Marco, Atti*, b. 16 bis (1428-1523), fol. 4v, cited in Paoletti (1894), pp. 11-12; Borenius (1909), p. 214 doct 1; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 118.

14. 1482, September 16. Vicenza

The brothers **Giacomo** and **Paganino**, sons of the late Paganino of Brendola, sell a *campo* in Brendola to **Bartolomeo Montagna**, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, for 50 *lire di piccoli*. On the same day, **Montagna** rents out the *campo* to them for ten years for 3 *lire di piccoli* per year. It is also agreed that **Giacomo** and **Paganino** can redeem the field after ten years by paying 50 *lire di piccoli*.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5097, anno 1482, fols 88-89, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 91, 103-104, 122; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 118.

15. [1483, February 23]. Venice

The **Scuola Grande di San Marco** agrees with **Bartolomeo Montagna** to pay him 200 ducats for two *teleri* of *The Flood* and *The Creation of the World*. The painter will receive 100 ducats for each *telero*.

ASVe, *Scuola Grande di San Marco, Atti*, b. 16 bis (1428-1523), fol. 6v, cited in Paoletti (1894), pp. 11-12; Borenius (1912), p. 215 doct 1; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 119.

16. 1483, September 1. Vicenza

Domenico, son of the late Vincenzo of Costabissara, sells four *campi* in Costabissara to **Bartolomeo Montagna**, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, for 100 *lire*. On the same day, **Montagna** leases the fields to **Domenico** for 6 *lire di piccoli* per year for ten years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5097, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 71, 92, 104; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 120.

17. 1484, March 5. Vicenza

The **Confraternita di San Bernardino**, represented by the painter Giampietro, Bono dal Ferro, Gabriele of Milano and Battista Magrè, sells its rights to two thirds of a house in *contrada* San Lorenzo to **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 200 ducats. **Montagna** pays this sum to the owner of the building, **Giacomo Gualdo**, son of the late Francesco. The painter pays **Gualdo** 80 ducats upfront, plus 6 ducats per year until 1490, when he finished to pay the house.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5009, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 43-44 doct 3; Borenius (1912), p. 6; Zorzi (1916), pp. 92, 104-105; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 120-121.

18. 1484, March 10. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna and the canon **Giovanni Battista Trento** agree on the price, size and subject of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts John the Baptist, Bartholomew, Augustine, Sebastian and Three Musical Angels* for San Bartolomeo, which will cost 100 gold ducats, including expenses for carving and gilding of the frame. It is also agreed that **Montagna** will have to paint the altarpiece within a year.

ASVi, *Notarile Francesco Sorio*, b. 4985, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 121-122.

19. 1484, April 1. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, pays **Giacomo Gualdo**, son of the late Francesco, 20 ducats as partial payment for his house in *contrada* San Lorenzo.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5009, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 92, 105; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 122.

20. 1484, April 10. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, buys a plot of around a *campo* in Costafabbrica from **Marzolino**, son of the late Gregorio of

Costafabbrica, for 50 *lire*. On the same day, **Bartolomeo** rents out the plot to **Marzolino** for 3 *lire* per year. **Marzolino** can redeem the plot within four years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5009, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 105; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 122-123.

21. 1484, October 4. Vicenza

Antonio of Orgiano, prior of the convent of Santa Maria di Monte Berico, and **Giancristoforo**, *sindicus* of the same convent, commission twenty-four backrests for the stalls of the church's choir, each of which will be paid 4.5 gold ducats, from the woodcarver **Pietro Antonio**, son of the late Paolo of Lendinara. The document suggests that **Bartolomeo Montagna** is involved in the execution of the preparatory drawings for the choir stalls.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5117, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 92, 105, 165-166 doct 37; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Dani (1965), p. 19; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 123-124.

22. [1486, December 11-12. Vicenza]

Bartolomeo Montagna and **Giovanni Magrè** reach some agreements. The note “Pacta inter dominum magistrum Bartholomeum Montagna pictorem et Iohannem de Magrade” is followed by some pages left blank by the notary. This document, which does not bear any date or transcription, has been linked by Lionello Puppi with the commission of **Montagna's** *Virgin and Child*

Enthroned with Sts Anthony of Padua and John the Evangelist, now in the church of the Castello of San Giovanni Ilarione, near Verona.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 93; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 124.

23. 1487, March 9. Bassano

The account book of the Council of Bassano del Grappa records a payment of 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi* to **Bartolomeo Montagna**.

ACB, *Comune di Bassano, Libri di cassa*, reg. 7.15, p. 145, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 44 doct 4; Borenius (1912), p. 8 note 2; Puppi (1962), p. 76; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 124.

24. 1488, October 7. Vicenza

Friar **Antonio Orsini**, procurator of Bono son of the late Giacomo da Pontoli of Orzinuovi, buys some plots of land in Orzinuovi from **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 919 *lire* and 1 *soldo*. **Orsini** pays for the plots half in cash, half by granting **Montagna** a credit of 445 *lire*, which he has lent to **Giorgio Corniani**. On the same day, **Corniani**, who cannot settle his debt of 445 *lire*, sells circa nine *campi* in Orzinuovi to **Montagna**, who rents out the fields to **Corniani** for 22 *lire* per year for six years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 94-95, 105-106; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 125-126.

25. 1488, November 25. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, purchases two *campi* in Montecchio Maggiore from **Gaspare Chemin**, son of the late Giacomo of Montecchio Maggiore, for 100 *lire di piccoli*. On the same day, **Montagna** leases the fields to **Gaspare Chemin** for 6 *staia* of wheat per year. Chemin is entitled to redeem the *campi*.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 106, 123; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 126.

26. 1488, December 8. Vicenza

The Vicentine brothers **Vincenzo** and **Francesco**, sons of the late tailor Bardino, sell a plot of around two *campi* in Ospedaletto to **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 100 *lire*. On the same day, **Montagna** rents out the *campi* for 6 *staia* of wheat per year to **Vincenzo** and **Francesco**, who can redeem the property within ten years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5083, fol. 119, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 106 (Zorzi erroneously dates the document to 6 December 1488); Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 126.

27. 1488, December 9. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, purchases one and a half *campi* in Borgo Berga from **Meneghino**, son of the late Cecchino of Arcugnano, for 50 *lire di piccoli*. On the same day, **Montagna** leases the *campi* to **Meneghino** for 3 *staia* of wheat per year.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 106-107, 114; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 126.

28. 1488, December 16. Vicenza

The Vicentine cobbler **Bernardino**, son of the late Girolamo of Arzignano, sells five *campi* in Montebello to **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 325 *lire* and 10 *soldi di piccoli*. On the same day, **Montagna** rents out the fields to **Bernardino** for 19.5 *staia* of wheat per year.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5083, fols 122v-123r, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Zorzi (1916), pp. 94, 107; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 126-127.

29. 1489, May 12. Vicenza

The Vicentine haberdasher **Giovanni Antonio**, son of the late Marco, sells a plot of land of around two *campi* in Borgo di Porta Nuova to **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 100 *lire*. On the same day, **Montagna** leases the plot to **Giovanni Antonio** for 6 *staia* of wheat per year for eight years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5102, fol. 64, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 94, 107; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 127.

30. 1490, March 18. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna pays **Giacomo Gualdo**, son of the late Francesco, 50 ducats as final payment for his house in *contrada* San Lorenzo.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5011, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 93, 107-108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 127-128.

31. 1490, May 22. Vicenza

The Vicentine noble **Giovanni Battista Gualdo**, son of the late Girolamo, buys some plots of land in Marola from **Francesco de Flocardis**, son of the late Giovanni Battista, for 100 gold ducats. On the same day, **Gualdo** rents out the same plots for 6 gold ducats per year to **Francesco**, who can redeem the land within five years. **Bartolomeo Montagna** acts as legal witness.

ASVi, *Notarile, Giovanni Pietro Revese*, b. 4801, vol. “1490-1493”, fols [1]-2, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Puppi (1962), p. 20; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

32. 1490. Pavia, seventeenth-century copy of the original document

Matteo Valerio, prior of the church of the Certosa di Pavia, declares that **Bartolomeo Montagna** has received 326 *lire* for painting the altarpiece of the *Virgin and Child with Sts John the Baptist and Jerome* for the church of the Certosa.

BBM, AD XV 12, 20/26, cited in Borenius (1912), p. 40 note 1; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

33. 1491, January 10. Vicenza

Pictor celeberrimus **Bartolomeo Montagna**, son of the late Antonio of Orzinuovi, sells five *campi* in Montebello to the Vicentine cobbler **Bernardino**, son of the late Girolamo of Arzignano, for 325 *lire* and 10 *soldi di piccoli*.

ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5300, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 128.

34. 1491, January 24. Vicenza

Meneghino Molendinario, son of the late Pasquale, buys a house in *sindicaria* di Carpagnon, or del Duomo, from the baker **Stefano**, son of the late Corrado de *Lemania*, for 200 *lire di piccoli*. Subsequently, **Meneghino** sells a part of this house, which is worth 6 ducats “super uno quadreto picto,” to **Bartolomeo Montagna**. A few days later, **Montagna** rents out his new property to the painter **Girolamo**, son of the late baker Stefano.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, b. 5502, fols 65v-66v, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 128-129.

35. 1491, March 24. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna purchases two *campi* in Biron from **Vincenzo**, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto, for 100 *lire di piccoli*. On the same day, **Montagna** rents out the fields to **Vincenzo** for 5 *lire di piccoli* and twelve hen eggs, which must be paid by March 1492.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, b. 5470, fol. 29, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 129.

36. 1491, May 10. Vicenza

After renouncing two and a half *campi* in Biron that he agreed to purchase on 24 March 1491, **Bartolomeo Montagna** buys four *campi*, one in Biron and

three in Borgo San Felice, from **Vincenzo**, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto, for 300 *lire di piccoli*. On the same day, **Montagna** leases the *campi* to **Vincenzo** for 15 *lire di piccoli* per year.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, b. 5502, fols 79v-82r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 130.

37. 1493, April 20. Vicenza

Since **Elisabetta**, Alvise Antonio Loschi's wife, was reported by the brothers **Gaspere** and **Simone**, sons of the late Bonomo of Pontalto, for negotiating some plots of land in Biron with **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 100 ducats, the **notary Nicolò Valdagno** settles the dispute by purchasing the rights to two plots of land from the brothers **Gaspere** and **Simone**.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5377, fols 33r-34r (see also ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5358, fol. 110v), cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 96, 108; Zaupa (1998), pp. 126, 214 notes 27-28; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 130.

38. 1493, September 12. Vicenza

The Vicentine citizen **Giovanni Bartolomeo Faccio**, son of the late Floriano of Creazzo, sells a *campo* with homestead in San Lazzaro to **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 125 *lire di piccoli*. **Faccio** is entitled to redeem the *campo*.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 4988, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 96, 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 130.

39. 1494, February 13. Vicenza

Meneghino, son of the late Cecchino of Arcugnano, returns 50 *lire di piccoli*, which he borrowed from **Bartolomeo Montagna** on 9 December 1488.

Montagna extends his *livello* with **Meneghino** by four years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 5010, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 106-107, 114; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 130-131.

40. 1494, June 17. Vicenza

Giovanni Bartolomeo Faccio, son of the late Floriano of Creazzo, purchases a *campo* with homestead in San Lazzaro from **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 125 *lire di piccoli*.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 4988, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 96, 108-109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 131.

41. 1494, September 12. Vicenza

Giovanni Cincani, who lives in Borgo di Porta Nuova in Vicenza, sells four small plots of land in Monteviale to his brother **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 56 ducats.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, b. 4989, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 96, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 131.

42. 1495, October 8 - 1496, May 26. Vicenza

Pietro Bissari, **Bartolomeo of Schio** and **Giovanni Battista Gualdo**, governors of the Ospedale dei Proti, record in the financial year 1494-1496 of their account book payments to **Bartolomeo Montagna**, who painted some frescoes in the Proti Chapel in the cathedral of Vicenza. **Montagna** will receive 40 ducats, plus wine and wheat. The document records the themes of the frescoes: four roundels with *The Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*, and *The Adoration of the Child with Sts James and Anthony the Abbot, and the Donor Giampietro Proti*.

IPAB, *Ospedale dei Proti*, b. 32 “Libri partite degli affittuali dell’Ospedale. 1492-1497”, reg. 17, fols 117v-118r, cited in Clerici (2001), pp. 162-163 doct 7; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 131-132.

43. 1495, January 14. Vicenza

Giorgio Corniani sells plots of land in Orzinuovi to his brother **Simone** for 445 *lire bresciane*, which **Giorgio** gives to **Bartolomeo Montagna** to settle a debt.

ASBr, *Notarile*, *Giovanni Antonio de Milis*, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 134.

44. 1496, May 19. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna sells two plots of land in Camisano for 100 *lire* to **Bartolomeo Vicentini**, who has been renting the plots at the cost of 6 *staia* of wheat per year.

ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Ascoli*, b. 5108, fols 156v-157r, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 132.

45. [1497, January 20- 1499. Vicenza]

Payments for **Bartolomeo Montagna's** *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Andrew, Monica, Ursula, Sigismund and Three Musical Angels*, painted for San Michele in Vicenza, are recorded in the financial year 1496-1499 of the account book of the **Squarzi** family.

Cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 34, 44-47 doct 5; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 132-133.

46. 1497, November 13. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna sells nine *campi* in Orzinuovi back to **Giorgio Corniani**.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "Francesco Scolari. 1497-1498", fols [1-2], cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 95, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 133-134.

47. 1499, April 14. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna and **Giovanni Battista Gualdo** go together to the Ufficio del Sale.

ASVi, *Notarile, Antonio Sarasin*, b. 4924, fol. 74v, cited in Zaupa (1998), p. 129; De Zuani (2015), pp. 91, 477.

48. 1499, July 13. Vicenza

The archdeacon **Graziadio Bonafino** and the chamberlain **Leonardo of Ancona**, both acting on behalf of the bishop of Vicenza **Giovanni Battista Zeno**, task **Bartolomeo Montagna** with painting an altarpiece with the Virgin flanked by four figures for the cathedral of Vicenza. **Montagna** will be paid 180 ducats, of which he will receive 115 ducats at the beginning of the work and the remaining upon its completion.

ASVi, *Notarile, Bartolomeo Aviano*, b. 4740, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 35, 47-48 doct 6; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109, 166-167 doct 38; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 134-135.

49. 1499, September 26. Vicenza

Since he cannot provide 69 ducats as final payment for his family altarpiece painted by **Bartolomeo Montagna**, **Bartolomeo Squarzi** hands over four plots of land with houses in Longare and Secula to the painter.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. “1499-1501”, fols [3v-5v], cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 35, 49 doct 7; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109-110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 135-136.

50. 1499, November 5. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna buys ten *campi* in Cittadella from **Pietro Calcia** for 100 gold ducats. On the same day, **Montagna** rents out the fields to **Calcia** for 6 gold ducats per year. **Calcia** can redeem the property within two years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. “1499-1501”, fols [6-9v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 109; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 136.

51. 1503, February 15. Vicenza

Excellens pictor **Bartolomeo Montagna** buys some plots of land with outbuildings in Longare and Secula from the Vicentine citizen **Alberto Godi**. **Bartolomeo Squarzi** and the artists Pietro, son of the late Donini of Parma, and Giulio Campagnola act as legal witnesses.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. “1499-1501”, fol. [5v], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 136-137.

52. 1504, March 24 - 1506, February 6. Verona

Sigismondo Guadagnino, prior of the Confraternita di San Biagio, which is based in the church of Santi Nazaro e Celso in Verona, records the expenses for the decoration of the San Biagio Chapel in the confraternity’s account book. Montagna’s frescoes in the chapel cost 150 ducats.

ASVr, *Corporazioni religiose, Santi Nazaro e Celso*, b. 14, reg. n. 36 “Libro de entra’ e spexa de la Compagnia”, fols 74r-76r, 118v-121r, cited in Biadego (1906), pp. 116-118; Borenius (1909), pp. 215-217; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 137-139.

53. 1504, December 23. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna declares that he has received 1 ducat from the Vicentine canon **Benedetto de Parlatoribus** as final payment for the altarpiece painted in the city cathedral for the bishop of Vicenza **Giovanni Battista Zeno**.

ASVi, *Notarile, Bartolomeo Aviani*, b. 4741, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 97, 110, 167 doct 39; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 139-140.

54. 1506, July 21. Padua

Bartolomeo Montagna receives part of the 250 ducats for painting the portraits of one hundred Paduan bishops in the hall of the Palazzo Vescovile of Padua.

ASP, *Notarile, Melchiorre Lovato*, b. 3395, fol. 453v, cited in Paolo Sambin, 'Nuovi documenti per la storia della pittura in Padova dal XIV al XVI secolo. I. Prospero da Piazzola, Bartolomeo Montagna, Jacopo da Montagnana, Jacopo da Feltre, Nicoletto da Modena,' *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova* 51:1 (1962), p. 108; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 140.

55. [1506], September 18. Padua

Bartolomeo Montagna declares that he has received 40 ducats, 3 *lire* and 12 *soldi* from **Nascinvera Trivisano**, butler of the bishop of Padua Pietro Barozzi, as final payment for his portraits of the Paduan bishops in the hall of the Palazzo Vescovile of Padua.

ASP, *Notarile, Melchiorre Lovato*, b. 3395, fol. 446, cited in Sambin (1962), pp. 122-123 doct 7; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 140-141.

56. 1508, May 20. Vicenza

Pictor famosus **Bartolomeo Montagna** rents out four small plots of land in Monteviale, which he purchased from his brother **Giovanni Cincani** in 1494, to **Francesco**, son of Iorio of Monteviale, for 9.5 *staia* of wheat per year for ten years.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. “1508”, fols [1-2], cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Zorzi (1916), pp. 98, 110; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 141.

57. 1508, September 6. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna sues **Pietro Gasparini**, procurator of the tailor Berto of Barbarano, who has not brought to the pawnshop 12 *staia* of wheat which **Pier Antonio Mantovano of Barbarano** owes him.

ASVi, *Magistrature giudiziarie vicentine, Banco della Ragione*, b. 2281 (anno 1508), cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 111; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 142.

58. 1509, August 18. Vicenza

Giovanni Battista Gualdo, son of the late Girolamo, makes a will, in which he demands to be buried in the church of San Lorenzo in Vicenza. **Bartolomeo Montagna** and his son **Paolo Cincani** act as legal witnesses.

ASVi, *Notarile, Antonio Sarasin*, b. 4967, fols 203r-204r, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 98; Puppi (1962), p. 77; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 142.

59. 1509, October 9. Vicenza

Piera Porto, son of the late Gabriele and Bernardino Pagello's widow, makes a will, in which she demands to be buried in the church of Santa Corona in Vicenza and asks for the completion of her chapel altarpiece (**Montagna's** *St Mary Magdalen with Sts Jerome, Paula (?), Monica and Augustine*). She also bequeaths 50 ducats to the canons of San Bartolomeo in Vicenza for the celebration of masses for her soul and her husband's before the Santa Monica altar built by the Pagello family.

ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5306, cited in Mantese (1968-1969), pp. 252-255 doct 4; Bucci (1991), p. 24 note 33; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 142-143.

60. 1510, March 12. Vicenza

Laura Zancani, goldsmith Giovanni Pietro's daughter and wife of Pietro della Colonna son of the late Giovanni Antonio *aromatarius*, makes a will. **Bartolomeo Montagna** acts as legal witness.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177, fasc. "1509-1512", cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 36, 99; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 144.

61. 1512, February 6. Padua

Nicola de Strata, guardian of the Scuola del Santo, agrees to pay **Bartolomeo Montagna** 20 ducats for frescoing the *Miracle or Recognition of the Jawbone*.

ASP, *Notarile, Gaspare de Salieri*, b. 2700, fols 296v-297r, cited in Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 144-145.

62. 1514, June 16. Padua

Piera Porto, son of the late Gabriele and Bernardino Pagello's widow, makes a second will, in which she demands to be buried in the church of Santa Corona. The will records that the altarpiece of *St Mary Magdalen with Sts Jerome, Paula (?), Monica and Augustine*, commissioned in 1507 by **Piera Porto** from **Bartolomeo Montagna** for the Porto Pagello Chapel in Santa Corona, will cost 40 ducats and 19 *grossi*.

ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, b. 5307, cited in Mantese (1968-1969), pp. 255-257 doct 4; Bucci (1991), p. 24 note 34; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 146-147.

63. 1517, July 2. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna rents out a fireplace and washbasin located on the ground floor of his house to **Arcangelo Romitani** of Antonio of Breganze for 3 gold ducats for a year.

ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 111; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 147.

64. 1517, November 24. Vicenza

The deputies *ad utilia* of the Council of Vicenza, **Montano Barbarano**, **Antonio Ferramosca**, **Angelo Caldogno**, **Matteo of Schio** and **Ettore Loschi** ratify expenses, including payments to **Bartolomeo** and **Benedetto**

Montagna on 2, 6 and 10 July 1517 for their paintings in the Palazzo del Podestà of Vicenza. On 2 July 1517 **Benedetto** receives “libras sex monete venete”; on 6 July 1517 **Bartolomeo** receives “libras sex soldos 4”; and on 10 July 1517 **Benedetto** receives “libras sex”.

BBVi, *Archivio del Comune di Vicenza, Libri delle provvisioni*, vol. 795, fol. 106, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 35; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 148.

65. 1518, January 11. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna leases a workshop with fireplace in his house to the haberdasher **Stefano Sogaro**, son of the late Girolamo, for 5 ducats for a year.

ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 111; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 148.

66. 1519, February 25. Vicenza

Bartolomeo Montagna authorises his procurator **Antonio Cincani**, son of the late Paolo, to sell his properties in Orzinuovi, as agreed on 30 December 1518.

ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 111-112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 148-149.

67. 1519, August 5. Vicenza

Vincenzo, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto, from whom, on 10 May 1491, **Bartolomeo Montagna** bought a plot of land in Biron which he could not

obtain due to the opposition of Alvise Antonio Loschi's heirs, reimburses **Montagna** by donating him two plots of land in San Felice.

ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075. (see also ASVi, *Antiche magistrature giudiziarie, Banco del Sigillo*, b. 5), cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 86, 112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 149.

68. 1519, August 31. Vicenza

Vincenzo, son of the late Bonomo of Pontalto, hands over all his rights to some plots of land in San Felice, for which, on 10 May 1491, he agreed to pay an annual rent of 15 *lire di piccoli* to **Bartolomeo Montagna**. In doing so, **Vincenzo** settles his rent arrears of 162 *lire di piccoli*.

ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075, cited in Zorzi (1916), pp. 86, 112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 149-150.

69. 1521, February 25. Vicenza

Nicolò Pina, son of the late Leonardo of Monteviale, sells his rights to a *campo* in Monteviale to the *pictor egregius* **Bartolomeo Montagna** for 2 ducats. On the same day, **Montagna** rents out the *campo* to **Nicolò Pina** for half a *staio* of wheat per year.

ASVi, *Notarile, Domenico Cisotti*, b. 5565, fol. 450, cited in Zorzi (1916), p. 112; Barausse in Lucco (2014), p. 150.

70. 1521, October 5. Vicenza

Pictor excellentissimus **Bartolomeo Montagna** makes a will, in which he demands to be buried in the church of San Lorenzo in Vicenza and appoints his son **Benedetto Montagna**, alongside **Benedetto**'s future legitimate sons, as his sole heir. The will is drafted in **Bartolomeo**'s house. The ageing painter is described as "...sanus corpore, mente, bono intellectu, clara loquella et optima memoria...".

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fol. 126, cited in Magrini (1863), p. 49; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 169-170 doct 41; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 150-152.

71. 1521, November 4. Vicenza

Pictor excellentissimus **Bartolomeo Montagna** expects to receive 80 ducats from the Scuola di San Giuseppe for painting an altarpiece showing the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts Joseph, Sebastian and Job*, as agreed on 21 April 1520. However, since the Scuola cannot pay Montagna the last 30 ducats, **Luca Zorgna**, *massaro* of the Scuola, hands over the crop income of 7 *staia* of wheat from two *campi* in Cologna Veneta to the painter. On the same day, **Montagna** leases the fields to **Lucia**, Francesco Facini's widow.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5389, fols 140v-141v, cited in Borenus (1909), pp. 217-218; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 167-168 doct 40; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 152-153.

72. 1523, May 6. Vicenza

Pictor excellentissimus **Bartolomeo Montagna** makes a second will, in which he demands to be buried in the church of San Lorenzo in Vicenza, and appoints his son **Benedetto Montagna**, alongside Benedetto's future legitimate sons, as his sole heir. **Bartolomeo** also bequeaths 150 ducats to **Giuseppe**, Benedetto's illegitimate son. The document attests that **Bartolomeo** died on 11 October 1523 ("Nota quod die anniversario XI^o mensis octobris 1523 suprascriptus praedictus testator ex hac vita migravit...").

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, b. 5390, anno 1523, fol. 82, cited in Magrini (1863), pp. 49-50; Zorzi (1916), pp. 112, 171-173 doct 42; Puppi (1962), p. 78; Barausse in Lucco (2014), pp. 153-154.

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ASBg, *Notarile, Bonadeo fu Bernardino de Lavallo*, b. 905.

ASBr, *Notarile, Giovanni Antonio de Milis*.

ASCViVe, *Serravalle*, serie 8, bb. 160, 163.

ASF, Fondo Rosselli del Turco, n. 6: *Debitori e creditori di Bernardo di Stefano Rosselli, 1500(1)-1512(13)*.

ASF, *Notarile Antecosimiano*, b. 11484.

ASP, *Notarile*, b. 1288, Liber v Instr. Gasparis de Varottaris.

ASP, *Notarile, Gaspare de Salieri*, b. 2700.

ASP, *Notarile, Melchiorre Lovato*, b. 3395.

AST, *Archivio Notarile*, b. 388.

AST, *Archivio Notarile*, b. 484.

ASVe, *Archivio Notarile. Atti*, b. 3299.

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ASVe, *Notarile, Marcantonio Cavanis*, b. 3300.

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ASVi, *Magistrature giudiziarie vicentine, Banco della Ragione*, b. 2281.

ASVi, *Notarile, Alessandro Como*, Bassano, 1591, 30 August.

ASVi, *Notarile, Antonio Sarasin*, bb. 4924, 4967, 4970.

ASVi, *Notarile, Bartolomeo Aviano*, bb. 4740, 4741.

ASVi, *Notarile, Bortolo Bassan*, b. 4541.

ASVi, *Notarile, Castelfranco, atti Francesco Dotto*, b. 84.

ASVi, *Notarile, Castelfranco, atti Gio. Batta Dotto*, b. 31.

ASVi, *Notarile, Daniele Ferretto*, b. 4618.

ASVi, *Notarile, Domenico Cisotti*, b. 5565.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Scolari*, b. 177.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Sorio*, bb. 4985, 4988-4989, 5009-5011.

ASVi, *Notarile, Francesco Zanechini*, bb. 5377, 5389-5390.

ASVi, *Notarile, Galeotto Aviano*, bb. 21/II, 23/III.

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ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Ferro*, bb. 5300, 5306-5307.

ASVi, *Notarile, Gregorio Malo*, b. 4643.

ASVi, *Notarile, Marcangelo Franceschini*, b. 6075.

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ASVi, *Notarile, Nicolò Valdagno*, bb. 5470, 5502.

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ASVr, *Corporazioni religiose, Santi Nazaro e Celso*, b. 14.

BBM, AD XV 12, 20/26.

BBVi, *Archivio del Comune di Vicenza, Libri delle provvisioni*, vol. 795.

BBVi, MS 3392.

BCM, *Carteggio Luigi Lanzi*, MS 770.I.176.

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BMVe, Girolamo Gualdo, 1650. *Giardino di Chà Gualdo*, MS it. IV 127 = 5102;

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